United Nations
GENERAL ASSEMBLY
FORTY-EIGHTH SESSION

Official Records

22nd
PLENARY MEETING

Friday, 8 October 1993
at 9.30 a.m.

NEW YORK

President: Mr. INSANALLY (Guyana)

The meeting was called to order at 10 a.m.

AGENDA ITEM 38

ELIMINATION OF APARTHEID AND ESTABLISHMENT OF A UNITED, DEMOCRATIC AND NON-RACIAL SOUTH AFRICA

The PRESIDENT: In connection with this item, the Assembly has before it a draft resolution issued as document A/48/L.2 and entitled "Lifting of sanctions against South Africa".

I call upon the Chairman of the Special Committee against Apartheid, Mr. Ibrahim Gambari, to introduce that draft resolution.

Mr. GAMBARI (Nigeria), Chairman of the Special Committee against Apartheid: On 24 September 1993 I had the honour and the privilege to welcome to this Hall the President of the African National Congress of South Africa (ANC), Mr. Nelson Mandela, who addressed the Special Committee against Apartheid on an issue of the utmost importance to the people of South Africa and the international community at large. Outlining the latest encouraging developments in the South African peace process, he paid a tribute to the international community's support, which had brought South Africa to the point where the transition to democracy had now been enshrined in the law of the country. The international community, he said, should now lay the basis for halting the economic slide towards social and economic disaster in South Africa as one of the imperatives for ensuring the success of the democratic transformation.

He therefore called on the international community to lift all economic sanctions against South Africa in response to the historic advances towards democracy that have been achieved, to strengthen the forces of democratic change and to help create the conditions necessary for stability and social progress.

Bearing in mind these developments and taking account of the fact that a broad spectrum of the South African people believe that enough progress has been made in the process of their transition to democracy to necessitate the lifting of economic sanctions, the international community cannot but recognize this reality and act in consonance with the wishes of the people of South Africa," even as it recognizes the existence of differences between the two liberation movements, the ANC and the Pan Africanist Congress of Azania (PAC), on the timing of the lifting of sanctions.

At an Extraordinary Ministerial Meeting of the Ad Hoc Committee on Southern Africa of the Organization of African Unity (OAU), which took place here in New York on 29 September 1993, the appeal for the lifting of economic sanctions was endorsed on behalf of the Organization of African Unity. African States, the international community at large and the United Nations in particular were called upon to respond positively to that appeal. Accordingly, I have discussed the matter with other members of the Special Committee against Apartheid and have had extensive consultations with many other Member States and interested parties within the United Nations.

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93-86801 (E)

Distr. GENERAL

A/48/PV.22
29 October 1993

ENGLISH

While the Ad Hoc Committee specifically supported the lifting of all economic sanctions, it accepted the retention of those which related to the arms embargo and to nuclear matters and which had been imposed by the Security Council. With respect to the oil embargo, it held the view that this should be lifted only after the establishment of the Transitional Executive Council (TEC) and the commencement of its work.

It is in this context that I would like to introduce draft resolution A/48/L.2, entitled "Lifting of sanctions against South Africa". While the first preambular paragraph reminds us to bear in mind the objectives of the Declaration on Apartheid and its Destructive Consequences in Southern Africa, which was adopted by consensus on 14 December 1989, the second preambular paragraph takes note of the fact that the transition to democracy has now been enshrined in the law of South Africa.

In operative paragraph 1 the General Assembly would decide that all provisions adopted by the Assembly relating to prohibitions or restrictions on economic relations with South Africa and its nationals should cease to have effect once the draft resolution is adopted. All States are requested to take appropriate measures within their jurisdiction to lift restrictions and prohibitions they had imposed to implement previous General Assembly resolutions and decisions on this matter.

In paragraph 2 the General Assembly would further decide that all provisions adopted by the General Assembly related to the imposition of an embargo on the supply of petroleum and petroleum products to South Africa, and on investment in the petroleum industry there, should cease to have effect as of the date on which the Transitional Executive Council becomes operational. All States are again requested to take appropriate measures within their jurisdiction to lift those restrictions or prohibitions.

As I said earlier, the submission of this draft resolution was preceded by extensive consultations with members of the various regional groups. Those consultations encourage me to hope that the draft resolution can be adopted without debate and without a vote. By adopting this draft resolution by consensus, the General Assembly will send a very strong signal to the South African people that the international community, and the United Nations in particular, are ready to assist them in the economic reconstruction of their country and to ensure that the new South Africa begins its existence unhampered by the constraints imposed on the old South Africa.

The PRESIDENT: It is my understanding that broad-based consultations within and among regional groups have taken place and that as a consequence draft resolution A/48/L.2 is a consensus text. It has furthermore been agreed that there will be no debate on the item at this stage. I would point out that the question of apartheid will be discussed in plenary meeting at a later date during this session; at that time members will have the opportunity to engage in a discussion of this most important, indeed historic, decision.

The Assembly will now take a decision on draft resolution A/48/L.2. May I take it that the Assembly decides to adopt it by consensus?

Draft resolution A/48/L.2 was adopted *(resolution 48/1)*.

The PRESIDENT: We have thus concluded this stage of our consideration of agenda item 38.

AGENDA ITEM 8 *(continued)*

ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA AND ORGANIZATION OF WORK: THIRD REPORT OF THE GENERAL COMMITTEE *(A/48/250/Add.2)*

The PRESIDENT: Following the very important decision that the Assembly has just taken, I now draw the attention of representatives to the third report of the General Committee concerning three requests submitted by the Secretary-General for the inclusion of additional items in the agenda.

First, in paragraph 1 (a) of the report, the General Committee recommends the inclusion in the agenda of the current session of an additional item entitled "Financing of the United Nations Observer Mission Uganda-Rwanda".

May I take it that the General Assembly decides to include this item in its agenda?

It was so decided.

The PRESIDENT: In paragraph 1 (b) of the report, the General Committee also recommends that this item should be allocated to the Fifth Committee.

May I take it that the General Assembly approves this recommendation?

It was so decided.

The PRESIDENT: Next, I should like to draw the attention of representatives to paragraph 2 (a) of the report (A/48/250/Add.2).

The General Committee recommends the inclusion in the agenda of the current session of an additional item entitled "Financing of the United Nations Mission in Haiti".

May I take it that the General Assembly decides to include this additional item in its agenda?

It was so decided.

The PRESIDENT: In paragraph 2 (b) of the report the General Committee also recommends that the item be allocated to the Fifth Committee.

May I take it that the General Assembly adopts this recommendation?

It was so decided.

The PRESIDENT: Next, I should like to draw the attention of representatives to paragraph 3 (a) of the report (A/48/250/Add.2).

The General Committee recommends the inclusion in the agenda of the current session of an additional item entitled "Financing of the United Nations Observer Mission in Liberia".

May I take it that the General Assembly decides to include this item in its agenda?

It was so decided.

The PRESIDENT: In paragraph 3 (b) of the report, the General Committee also recommends that the item be allocated to the Fifth Committee.

May I take it that the General Assembly adopts that recommendation?

It was so decided.

The PRESIDENT: The Chairman of the Fifth Committee will be informed of the decisions that we have just taken.

AGENDA ITEM 9 *(continued)*

GENERAL DEBATE

ADDRESS BY MR. FIDEL MOUNGAR, PRIME MINISTER OF THE REPUBLIC OF CHAD

The PRESIDENT *(interpretation from French)*: The Assembly will now hear a statement by the Prime Minister of the Republic of Chad.

Mr. Fidel Moungar, Prime Minister of the Republic of Chad was escorted to the rostrum.

The PRESIDENT *(interpretation from French)*: I have great pleasure in welcoming the Prime Minister of the Republic of Chad, His Excellency Mr. Fidel Moungar, and inviting him to address the General Assembly.

Mr. MOUNGAR (Chad) *(interpretation from French)*: It is both an honour and a pleasure for me to extend to representatives the warm greetings of the people of Chad and to express their sincere wishes for peace.

Before conveying to Members the message of the Transition Government of the Republic of Chad, I should like to extend to you, Sir, my delegation's congratulations on your election as President of the General Assembly at its forty-eighth session. I assure you that, in the discharge of this difficult task, you will have the ready and full cooperation of my delegation.

I should like also to express to your predecessor, Mr. Stoyan Ganev, our gratitude for the dedication with which he conducted the work of the General Assembly at its forty-seventh session.

Our thanks go also to our dynamic Secretary-General, Mr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali, for his continuing commendable and tireless efforts in the cause of peace and development throughout the world.

It is also a pleasure to welcome the delegations of the Czech Republic, Slovakia, The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Eritrea, the Principality of Andorra and the Principality of Monaco.

The forty-eighth session of the General Assembly is beginning at a time when clear hopes for peace in certain regions are emerging, yet war continues to cause unspeakable suffering elsewhere. Misery is increasing throughout the world, and the gap between the richest and the poorest continues to widen. Given these problems, the United Nations is increasingly called upon for assistance. Consequently, its capacity to react and to intervene is reduced.

Concerted action by people of good will who love peace and freedom and who work to reduce poverty and misery and to advance democracy and human rights could help to limit the number of calls for assistance that are now being made on this Organization.

Within this framework, Chad set out on the road to democracy in 1990. This deliberate choice was made in the light of the recent history of our country and the profound aspirations of our people to peace and social well-being. In this regard, the Sovereign National Conference that was held from 15 January to 7 April 1993, and brought together nearly 1,000 delegates from all regions and all social strata of the country, enabled us to lay the basis for the establishment of stable democratic institutions and to ensure lasting peace and good management of the country's affairs. This National Conference, which instilled much hope in the hearts of the citizens of Chad, took the following steps in implementation of the Transitional Constitution: the President of the Republic, who is the guarantor of national sovereignty, was confirmed in office; the Prime Minister, who is the elected Head of Government, was put in charge of implementing the programme of action; the Supreme Council of Transition, the elected legislative body, was put in charge of follow-up action in connection with implementing the programme of action and was given the job of providing arbitration in the case of any disputes occurring during the transition.

The National Conference intended, through this restructuring process, to give new direction to public life in Chad, providing transparent administration in public affairs, full freedom of the press and scrupulous respect for human rights. These indispensable corollaries of any democratic system are among the major concerns of the delegates. Here, the Supreme Council for Communication and the National Commission on Human Rights, which will be established soon, will guarantee freedom of the press and the fundamental rights of citizens.

For all the participants in the National Conference, as for all the people of Chad, the time has come to make peace, to seek new solutions to the country's problems, so that it will be possible to achieve genuine national reconciliation among all the sons of Chad. The Transition Government, which I have the signal honour of heading, is making sustained efforts to realize these objectives. Thus, it is trying to create the conditions necessary to the building of confidence among the people in the future of their country.

The restructuring of the national army of Chad that is now taking place will eventually open the way to better control of public expenditure and will make possible the channelling of the country's limited resources into the most productive sectors. Nor can any democratization be undertaken and made stable without security services capable of ensuring respect for the territorial integrity of the country. Above all, there is a need for a disciplined army that respects the Constitution of the Republic.

My Government lacks the financial and other material means to succeed in this transformation of the national army of Chad. First and foremost we need to encourage elements of the army from the outset by financing projects for military reconversion and for reintegration into civilian life. In that connection, we warmly thank the French Republic for its assistance over the past three years. I wish also to renew our appeal to all countries that wish Chad to be genuinely transformed to help us with all possible assistance in this difficult task.

Beyond the question of the success of the demobilization operation is the question of the future of democracy in Chad. Our democracy will be unable to withstand for long the many pressures resulting from all the various problems besetting our country.

Hence, my country is working tirelessly to conclude agreements of reconciliation with the remaining opposition politico-military organizations. My Government is developing initiatives in the area of human rights, bolstering freedom of the press and establishing political parties and civic organizations. Despite that progress, cases of human rights violations continue in my country. This proves, if proof were needed, that it takes time to change ways of thinking, no matter what the clear will of the highest national authorities may be.

There is no lack of obstacles for any young democracy. As it is said, democracy, poverty and insecurity are not good neighbours. At the forty-seventh session of the General Assembly, my delegation drew attention to my country's precarious economic situation. Apart from problems linked to uneven rainfall over our territory, to the threat of locusts and to fluctuations in the world economic situation, our economy is experiencing difficulties linked to poor administration. The resources of the State are insufficient to pay salaries and growing military expenditures. There is no guarantee that we will be able to afford the cost of materials and State contributions for investment in priority projects relating to infrastructure, health and education.

The basic imbalances that characterize financial management in Chad - which explain the continued deterioration of our country's social fabric - reflect those in other Central African economies covered by the Central African Customs and Economic Union (CACEU). Those countries had achieved notable growth in 1985, but since then have been in an unprecedented crisis. In the circumstances, my country - current Chairman of the CACEU Council of Heads of State - fully subscribes to the plan for subregional adjustment and economic recovery drawn up by the Central African States Development Bank, and hopes to benefit from the greater understanding and support of the international community. That support will give our Government a sound basis on which to implement, as it has declared its wish to do, a consistent programme of macroeconomic adjustment and structural reform, with the support of bilateral and multilateral donors.

Already we can say that the major thrust of the reforms will be in the areas of improved public financing, the resumption of productive activities through reductions in the cost of the elements of production, rationalization of management, elimination of arrears in State debt, the promotion of a well-functioning private sector, and the implementation of monetary, fiscal, customs and institutional measures drawn up within the subregional framework of CACEU and the customs zone.

My country, which has experienced the throes of war, cannot remain insensitive to the many conflicts that are tearing today's world apart, claiming innocent lives everywhere. In Africa, we are concerned at the exacerbation of the situation in Somalia and Angola. Chad hopes that the firm position adopted by the United Nations on those two conflicts will help make those most responsible for the tragedies respect agreements they have signed.

With respect to Mozambique, we are following with interest the peace process under way in that country, and we urge the two parties to cooperate fully and in a straightforward way to achieve peace. We also welcome the peace process that has begun in Rwanda, Liberia and South Africa, where in the months to come multiparty negotiations will lead to general elections, which we hope will be free and transparent.

In the Middle East, the signature of a declaration of principles on Palestinian autonomy in Gaza and Jericho and mutual recognition by the Palestine Liberation Organization and the State of Israel give us hope that the peoples of that region will at last be able to live in peace. Dialogue and cooperation should guide future relations among the peoples of the region.

Chad is convinced that only dialogue can restore peace to Central and Eastern Europe; we fully subscribe to the action taken by the international community to bring about a just and peaceful settlement of all the conflicts raging there.

Today's world economy is characterized by a structural crisis in the developed countries and by increasingly delayed development in the developing countries, particularly those of Africa. My country welcomes the convening of the international conference on African development, which is now under way on the initiative of the Government of Japan. We hope that the results of that meeting will be positive for Africa. On behalf of my Government, I convey deep gratitude to the Japanese Government for its initiative.

My delegation hopes that the restructuring and revitalization of the economic and social structure of the United Nations will contribute to strengthening the Organization's capacity to act.

My delegation reaffirms its strong conviction that only dialogue and cooperation will enable us to overcome the numerous obstacles to the establishment of peace and harmony among peoples.

It is in that spirit that my country has appealed to the International Court of Justice to settle its border dispute with the Socialist People's Libyan Arab Jamahiriya. Both parties have committed themselves to respect the judgment.

Members will know from my remarks that my country is passing from a long, dark night of instability, dictatorship, human rights violations and economic set-backs. They will also know that the heroic struggle of the people of Chad has led it onto the path of democracy; we want at all costs to stay on that road. My delegation affirms that forcefully.

My people earnestly desires to make achievements leading to a major recovery in its political, economic and social situation, and has adopted an ambitious programme of change, which we did not have the means to implement fully in the six months remaining in the transition period. As they tirelessly pursue implementation, my country's officials intend to focus all their efforts on certain pivotal objectives, which I shall enumerate now.

First, we must ensure unswerving respect for human rights by guaranteeing the security of citizens; we must ensure freedom of communication, along with all individual freedoms and, above all, respect for the value of human life. We must banish the concept of impunity from our judicial system. To that end, and to ensure the safety of our citizens through a major reorganization of the police, we require support from the international community both in devising the action to be taken and in providing the means to do so.

My Government's second objective is the holding of free, open and democratic elections.

The social crisis we have just described is creating inextricable problems for my Government, problems with serious and pressing implications. A country cannot be governed when there is constant pressure from the streets, nor can decisive efforts be focused on carrying out economic recovery if there is not a Government elected on the basis of a programme containing needed beneficial measures and if it does not have the support - or at least the understanding - of the people with regard to an economic and social plan. Thus, our Government intends to work on preparing for and holding free, open and democratic elections within the time-frame set out in the recommendations of the Sovereign National Conference. Here too, and above all, we will need the support of the international community.

On that note, in evoking the basic aspiration of my people, I shall leave this rostrum today, having transmitted my country's message of peace to the international community. Our aspiration to democratic change is, I feel, realistic and its implementation is, I believe, inevitable. Long live peace and dialogue between peoples!

The PRESIDENT *(interpretation from French)*: On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the Prime Minister of the Republic of Chad for the important statement he has just made.

Mr. Fidel Moungar, Prime Minister of the Republic of Chad, was escorted from the rostrum.

AGENDA ITEM 9 (continued)

GENERAL DEBATE

Mr. OYONO (Cameroon) *(interpretation from French)*: In extending to you, Sir, the warmest congratulations of the delegation of Cameroon on your election to the presidency of the forty-eighth session of the General Assembly, I am not merely obeying protocol. I do so as well out of my wish to pay a tribute to your outstanding qualities and to welcome the significant contribution your country, Guyana, has made to the building of a more just and more united world.

Your predecessor, our colleague Mr. Ganev of Bulgaria, carried out his mandate very well. We are grateful to him and express all our appreciation to him.

For two years now our Secretary-General, Mr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali, has devoted unusual energy to the management of the Organization, management that has been made difficult by the increase in the number of United Nations missions, the complexity of the challenges to be met, and the acute financial crisis that is hindering the successful carrying out of his activities. Cameroon wishes to commend him for his wisdom and to assure him of its support.

The Organization's universality has been enhanced by the admission of six new Member States. It is a pleasure for me to welcome them among us and to assure them of Cameroon's readiness to maintain and develop relations of cooperation and friendship with them.

The especially significant and unexpected changes that have marked the end of this century confirm our feeling that we must never despair of the human being and that, whatever the circumstances may be, we must keep faith in mankind's future.

Indeed, the forty-eighth session of the General Assembly is being held at a time when the image of that historic handshake between Prime Minister Itzhak Rabin and President Yasser Arafat is still bright in our minds, a handshake that sealed the mutual recognition between Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization and consecrated the agreement on autonomy for Gaza and Jericho. Never before have conditions been as conducive to the building of a lasting peace in the Middle East.

That historic event, a sign of the times, was followed by the adoption by the Parliament of South Africa, which is still composed exclusively of whites and coloureds, of the agreement to establish a Transitional Executive Council, conferring upon the black majority a right to participate in the management of that country's affairs with an eye to the April 1994 elections, which should usher in a united, democratic and non-racial South Africa.

Those are undeniably two major events of exceptional significance, events that demonstrate the extent of the upheaval in the world we are now witnessing.

Allow me, therefore, to salute the courage and great vision demonstrated by the Israeli Government and the leaders of the Palestine Liberation Organization. Certainly, the peace in the Middle East that had seemed elusive is now within reach. Cameroon had always hoped for this, and we are therefore gratified at the progress made and wish to pay a tribute to the various protagonists who contributed to it.

And with regard to this situation, has the time not come to update the Organization's documents dealing with the situation in the Middle East? Cameroon intends to contribute to the consideration of this question the circumstances call for. The tone and provisions of resolutions concerning South Africa also need to be brought into line with the changes taking place in that country.

Cameroon supported the appeal made from this rostrum by President Nelson Mandela for the lifting of the economic sanctions against South Africa. We salute that outstanding son of Africa, and we include in this commendation President De Klerk, whose open-minded attitude has earned our admiration.

The democratic transition in South Africa is at once fragile and promising for the whole of the African continent. It demands the support of the international community, which must work to put an end to violence and the destabilizing actions of the forces in the country that are opposed to change.

Unfortunately, this remarkable improvement in the situations in the Middle East and South Africa cannot mask the threats to international peace and security caused by the persistence of armed conflicts in various parts of the world arising out of ethnic claims, the resurgence of nationalistic feelings, religious intolerance, the desire for power, poverty and underdevelopment.

At the very heart of Europe, a frightful war continues in the Balkans, a war the more frightful because the ideology underlying it is an affront to the conscience of mankind. The indignation it has aroused throughout the world demands that the weapons be silenced to enable the virtues of dialogue to prevail over the logic of exclusion and conquest. That war is also sorely testing the international community's ability to defend the principles and values of civilization in our era.

It is equally untenable that in Angola innocent people, caught up in an increasingly senseless war, continue to be massacred. It must be obvious to everyone that a solution to the Angolan problem cannot be imposed by force of arms. It resides in concertation, dialogue and negotiation. We therefore urge the parties concerned to seize this most recent opportunity to achieve peace afforded them by strict implementation of the Abidjan Agreements and the relevant resolutions of the Security Council.

The imperatives of peace are also pressing upon our Liberian, Somali and Mozambican brothers and sisters, who have legitimate aspirations to the stability needed to reconstruct their countries.

As regards Haiti, it is also important, if legality is to triumph, that everything possible be done for the implementation of the Governors Island Agreement.

In Western Sahara, we have not lost hope that, following the negotiations now under way, the obstacles to a referendum on the future status of the territory will be removed.

In other parts of the world where hotbeds of tension persist the spirit of confrontation must yield to the search for negotiated solutions. In this context, Cameroon welcomes the decisive contribution of the United Nations to the restoration of peace in Cambodia. In paying tribute to the memory of all those who have paid for peace in Cambodia with their lives, I include Captain Ndi Ncho

Abrahams of the Cameroonian contingent of military observers of the United Nations Transitional Authority in Cambodia (UNTAC), who fell on the field of honour in Phnom Penh on 7 September 1993.

I also wish to extend here our warm congratulations to His Majesty King Norodom Sihanouk on his restoration to the throne of Cambodia. We are convinced that his lofty stature, eminent qualities and long experience will help his country to set out again on the path to progress and the reconciliation of its children.

Meeting the challenge of peace, involves not only the silencing of weapons, but also ensuring the reconstruction of countries ravaged by war. We therefore appeal that, as measures are taken to settle certain regional conflicts, the necessary resources be mobilized to meet, as well as humanitarian needs, the reconstruction needs of African countries that have been torn by armed conflicts.

This would bolster the willingness of the African Heads of State to assume greater responsibility in the prevention, management and settlement of conflicts in their region. The mechanism created for that purpose at the twenty-ninth Summit of the Organization of African Unity deserves the support of the international community, as it is involved in the implementation of the agenda for peace adopted by the Security Council. Furthermore, the adoption in Libreville in September 1993 of a non-aggression pact between the 11 States members of the Economic Community of Central African States is part of this trend. Concluded in the framework of the Standing Advisory Committee on Security Questions in Central Africa, created last year by the Secretary-General of the United Nations, this agreement is an essential link in the chain of confidence-building measures aimed at the progressive reduction of the armed forces and military budgets of the States of the subregion. Our States are thereby determined to create an area of peace, security and solidarity. We are thus entitled to expect the continued support of the international community for this initiative, sponsored by the United Nations.

In a more general context, the progress achieved in the field of disarmament and arms limitation should continue. We call on the major Powers to redouble their efforts to accelerate the disarmament process, especially in the field of nuclear weapons. The conclusion of a treaty banning nuclear tests would meet the expectations of the international community, just as the indefinite extension of the Non-Proliferation Treaty would help reassure the non-nuclear-weapon States. In this respect, we praise the dialogue being pursued by the parties concerned to find a negotiated solution to the differences between North Korea, on the one hand and the International Atomic Energy Agency and the Government of the United States of America on the other.

Lastly, the progressive establishment of the structures of the Organization's executive secretariat for the control of chemical weapons strengthens our conviction that general and complete disarmament is not just a dream. It is a fervent aspiration of mankind that could be achieved if greater political will were focused on that goal.

At the recent World Conference on Human Rights, held in Vienna, our common vision of the values underlying mankind's shared aspiration to the effective enjoyment of human rights made the longstanding dispute about a possible hierarchy as between civil and political rights and economic, social and cultural rights outdated. Now enshrined as indivisible and interdependent, all these rights have one objective alone: the promotion and protection of human dignity, regardless of considerations of race, colour, sex or religion. Recognition of that objective has contributed to the rebirth of the idea of the universality of human rights and has given those rights the moral and legal force of a categorical imperative with unassailable legitimacy.

This development encourages the Government of Cameroon, with the impetus given by His Excellency President Paul Biya, to continue updating the legal and institutional frameworks to promote the effective enjoyment of human rights by our citizens. Our resolute march towards democracy can be gauged by the incomparable freedom of expression burgeoning throughout our national media, the flourishing of political parties, the vitality of popular participation in public life and the establishment, in the wake of the State's gradual disengagement, of new and vast areas for the development of private initiative.

The National Committee on Human Rights and Freedoms, whose activities enhance its credibility, is helping enormously to make public opinion aware of the importance of human rights and to alert our authorities to any possible violation. The recent organization in Yaoundé by the United Nations Centre for Human Rights of a training seminar for members of that Committee highlights the role of international cooperation in the promotion of human rights, particularly in developing countries.

This cooperation suggests a new approach, necessitating a reversal of the tendency to turn human rights into political tools. This tendency often leads to a selective awareness of human rights violations and discrimination in the application of sanctions. Cooperation also suggests a new type of partnership, allowing the highly publicized activism on human rights to be replaced by calm and constructive dialogue between the various parties in charge of promoting and protecting human rights - States, national institutions, non-governmental organizations and multilateral institutions. In this context, the proposal to establish a post of high commissioner for human rights has its merits. None the less, it gives rise to some questions, the importance of which requires that it be considered attentively and in depth.

The universality of human rights, which everyone must henceforth respect, requires the democratization of international economic relations. It would be unrealistic to circumscribe the exercise of democracy within national boundaries, when there are also flagrant injustices in international economic relations that constitute grave violations of human dignity.

A victim of such injustices, Africa, more than any other developing region, has the characteristics of a continent adrift. It is toiling under an intolerable debt burden in a situation exacerbated by an overall trend towards disinvestment, a decline in official development assistance and a steady deterioration in the terms of trade as a result of the continuing fall in commodity prices.

In these circumstances, is it acceptable that net financial flows should continue from the impoverished African countries to the rich countries? As we have already pointed out, this situation cannot be considered in economic terms alone. It is an ethical problem involving the conscience of our Northern partners and of international financial institutions.

Need we recall that despite the seriousness of the economic crisis they are facing the African States, like the countries of the East, have undertaken courageous reforms towards liberalizing their economies and democratizing their political systems?

While we are pleased at the mobilization of resources aimed at accompanying reform in the countries of the East, we must deplore the fact that no similar effort has been made for the benefit of the African countries that are also in a state of transition. Structural adjustment plans are the only alternative solution proposed to them. Because they are becoming increasingly exorbitant and difficult to bear, their social costs need to be given more attention by our partners so that the already fragile foundations of our young States will not crumble.

The very recent International Conference, on African Development, held in Tokyo, will give us an opportunity to draw the attention of the international community to the distress of the African continent.

The failure of the United Nations Programme of Action for African Economic Recovery and Development 1986-1990 and the disappointing progress of the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s underscore, if need be, the urgent need to establish for that continent a consistent set of measures to stimulate recovery including, in particular, debt alleviation and the enhancement of human resources, the transfer of technology, support for the diversification of production and the improvement of conditions for access of our products to international markets.

We must set our sights on establishing a fund for financing African development. The imperatives of international solidarity are not consistent with compartmentalization on the basis of racial or geographical considerations. Hence, we cannot leave the African countries at the mercy of market forces, which are devoid of all legitimacy owing to speculation. The international community must therefore undertake to construct a more legitimate new world order that is in keeping with full respect for law and justice.

The world partnership for sustainable development enshrined in Rio de Janeiro responds to this aspiration. While we are pleased at the establishment of the Commission for Sustainable Development, the release of resources required for the financing of Agenda 21 has not yet been accomplished.

In the social sphere, activities conducted throughout the United Nations system with a view to fighting against the AIDS pandemic and to repressing the illicit traffic in narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances deserve high priority in the agenda of our Organization.

Similar importance should be attached to the integration of women in the process of development and to the protection of vulnerable groups of society.

The International Conference on Population and Development planned for Cairo in 1994, the World

Summit for Social Development, to be held in 1995 in Copenhagen, and the Fourth World Conference on Women, to be held also in 1995, in Beijing, will offer opportunities to review all of these issues at the highest level. These gatherings will make it possible for us to refine our understanding of these problems in order better to integrate them in our development policies.

Guaranteeing international peace and security and promoting the economic and social development of its Members are the tasks that the United Nations has been called upon to perform since its establishment. The changes generated by the end of East-West rivalry have created conditions more conducive to the attainment of these objectives. Our Organization should therefore rethink its structures and its working methods in order to increase their effectiveness, the better to respond to the ever-growing expectations of the international community.

The restructuring process under way is of course part of this trend. We are pleased at the prevailing spirit of consensus in the search for solutions to this problem - a problem made complex and delicate because of the need to reconcile the need for effectiveness and the imperative of democratization which alone can safeguard the plurality of approaches that underlies the universality of our Organization.

Mr. Kharrazi (Islamic Republic of Iran), Vice-President, took the Chair.

In this context, the reform of the Security Council should not be confined to a mere broadening of its composition. It should above all make it possible to revive the spirit behind the decision to confer upon the members of the Council broad powers regarding the maintenance of international peace and security. These powers should therefore be exercised in the interest of all, and not on the basis of other considerations.

The General Assembly should, along the same lines, remain a global forum where the positions of States are expressed and harmonized. We are therefore in favour of a strong Secretariat endowed with adequate structures and with a highly qualified staff that reflects the diversity and the excellence of the peoples of the United Nations. This means that throughout the system and within our Organization, the ongoing process of restructuring should be consistent with the spirit of the Charter.

Mankind has always cherished the utopian dream of a world in which man would no longer be a danger to his fellow man, and in which peace, justice and equity would prevail. The sudden acceleration of history at the turn of this century gives this utopian hope an impetus that enhances our shared perception of the need to establish a new and more united world order. This "promise of history" being shaped will be an expression of the convergence of our will to free mankind of the consequences of a past that we hope is forever behind us. The universal conscience cannot put up with the horrors of war and of flagrant violations of human rights, nor should it at the dawning of the third millennium tolerate the persistence of poverty and hardship that trample underfoot the intrinsic values of our shared humanity.

Thus the United Nations must meet the challenge of renewal in order fully to play its central role in the building of a world consistent with the ideals of its founding fathers. In the final analysis, history condemns us to be hopeful - in the midst of violence, does man not persevere in his utopian dream of peace?

Mr. QHOBELA (Lesotho): On behalf of the Lesotho delegation and on my own behalf, I wish to congratulate Ambassador Insanally on his election to the presidency of the General Assembly at its forty-eighth session. His election is a well-deserved tribute to his great personal qualities and also to the dynamic role that the Republic of Guyana has always played within the United Nations and in world affairs. We are also indebted to the dedication and the effective manner in which his predecessor, His Excellency Mr. Stoyan Ganev of the Republic of Bulgaria, guided the deliberations of this lofty body during the forty-seventh session of the General Assembly.

Allow me also to extend our congratulations to that distinguished son of Africa, His Excellency Mr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali, Secretary-General of the United Nations, whose untiring global efforts for peace continue to inspire us all. My delegation wishes to reiterate once more its readiness to continue to cooperate with him in every way that would promote international cooperation and understanding, in conformity with the Charter of our Organization.

On behalf of my delegation, allow me also to express, like those who have spoken before me, deepest condolences to the Government and the people of the Republic of India for the tragic loss of human lives resulting from the recent earthquake in that country.

Since 1945 the membership of the United Nations has increased dramatically, lending credence to the universality

of this Organization and bearing out the wisdom of the founding fathers. Today we welcome the new Members to a United Nations whose numerical strength is matched by the broadened scope of its vision, the depth of its commitment to global issues and the capacity of its operations world wide which, more than ever before, it behooves us all to enhance further. We also look forward to welcoming back into the fold a free, democratic and non-racial Republic of South Africa in the very near future.

With the emergence of the new world order, we are today at a high tide of opportunity to realize the vision of global peace that inspired the United Nations Charter in 1945. The original design for peace, as outlined in the Charter in 1945, seems to be in sight with the emergence of that new world order.

The commendable efforts made by the Secretary-General towards the promotion of international peace and security and for the consolidation of peaceful coexistence among nations are about to bear results. Following the period characterized by international relations of confrontation between the military blocs of East and West, we see around us today an increasing recognition among nations of the need for the settlement of international and regional problems by peaceful means, that is, through negotiation and dialogue. All these developments augur well for the realization of the goals and objectives we set for ourselves in San Francisco in 1945.

Recent developments, however, continue to test our Organization's capacity to make the initiative of 1945 a reality. New challenges have emerged and continue to confront us. Though different in nature and content from those of the past, they are no less important in their bearing, scope and influence on peace and the future of mankind.

The beginning of this last decade of the century held out hope for international peace and stability. The world community lifted itself from the trenches of the cold war, pledging to build for mankind a new world order firmly based on legitimacy, cooperation and respect for the rights and dignity of the human person. The residual tendencies to confrontation were also collectively suppressed by the united world action in the Gulf.

The euphoria of a world finally at peace has not, regrettably, been universal. From Angola to Somalia to Bosnia and Herzegovina and, recently, in the political standoff in the Russian Federation, we witness a world haunted anew by disputes originating from legacies of the past. The destructiveness and brutality of internal wars are threatening to unweave the very tapestry on which civilization is based.

As it stands on the eve of celebrating the golden jubilee of the Charter, the world body must recognize the need for increased resources and more balanced burden-sharing among Member States in order to strengthen the capacity of the United Nations to fulfil effectively its peacemaking and peace-keeping obligations. It must continue to pursue more resolutely the objectives of the Charter, all of which stipulate that the realization of peace and development are legitimate aspirations of all peoples.

In the past we have talked about the urgent need for the democratization and restructuring of the United Nations. In this regard, we take note of the commendable efforts which are being made by the Secretary-General to strengthen the structures of the other organs of the Organization within the context of "An Agenda for Peace" and through regional commissions.

In the aftermath of the cold war and at a time when international relations are being reshaped, it is necessary that the imbalances inherent in the present United Nations system be reviewed and corrected. Such an exercise should take into account the principles of decentralization of resources and equitable geographical representation in the decision-making organs of the world body. Like a world parliament, the United Nations must reflect in its structures the same democratic values that it advocates, the values of fairness, transparency and equitable representation, in order to validate the principle of equality of States.

The need for democratization extends, in particular, to the Security Council. The African continent accounts for almost one third of the United Nations membership. In the spirit of reflecting the regional diversity of our Organization, we must consider positively the interest of Africa in being allotted at least two permanent seats on the Security Council and an increased number of non-permanent seats.

Never before in the history of the United Nations has the world been presented with a greater opportunity for peace. The challenge of this opportunity will require us to conduct international relations with the vision and realism of people who recognize how near, in the past, the world has been to the edge of the precipice.

The United Nations global peace-keeping missions are a beacon of hope and a source of inspiration to peace-loving communities world wide that are ravaged by war and strife and in many cases have nowhere else to turn. But even in these trying times, a great opportunity exists, an opportunity possibly greater than any the world community of nations has seen since the founding of this Organization for the creation and maintenance of global peace.

Notwithstanding the positive initiative taken by the major nuclear Powers since the end of the cold war, there is still a need to establish a close link between disarmament and international peace in the years ahead. This is the ideal formula to fulfil the aspirations of mankind for a life that is free from the threat of war. To be effective towards this end, disarmament must be universal and embrace all categories of weapons, including conventional weapons.

We also recognize that the global reduction of military expenditures could enable the world to redirect its resources to development and to meet the challenge of reversing the environmental degradation of our planet on the eve of the twenty-first century.

The hopes of the world were placed last year in the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED). The Earth Summit broke fresh ground in addressing global environmental and development crises. While it did not solve these problems, it at least succeeded in building a large amount of goodwill for the global economic partnership that is so vital if addressing the many environmental problems that the UNCED process recognized and, indeed, highlighted, are to be addressed.

More than a year after the Rio Conference, the establishment of the high-level Commission on Sustainable Development remains the most tangible development so far. The majority of the commitments made by world Governments in Rio are yet to be matched with actual deeds. The global trends towards the reduction of aid budgets by the developed countries and the intensifying commercial and political pressure on aid administration contrast sharply with the commitments made by these countries in Rio to reach the United Nations target of 0.7 per cent of gross national product in aid towards assisting the developing countries make a transition to sustainable development.

Another source of great disappointment is the continuing decline in voluntary contributions to the United Nations operational activities. The United Nations system has a central role to play in channelling assistance to developing countries, capitalizing on its comparative advantages of neutrality, widespread field-level presence and rapid response.

The least developed countries are continuing to experience a deterioration of their socio-economic situation owing to profound structural constraints and handicaps which reduce their ability to overcome the negative impact of external factors. The issue of the stalemate in multilateral trade negotiations under the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) is a matter of great concern to the developing countries. Further delays towards successful, balanced and comprehensive GATT negotiations will render the principle of trade as the engine of growth and development an illusion. These basic economic structural problems, coupled with a proneness to natural disasters, seriously hamper these countries' efforts towards meaningful economic growth.

The recent drought which struck the countries of eastern and southern Africa was the worst ever. In Lesotho, the Government has had to declare a state of continuing drought emergency and to extend provision of drought-relief measures for another year, until June 1994. We wish to express our gratitude to the Secretary-General and his team for their efforts in convening, jointly with the Southern African Development Community, a donors' conference in Geneva last year to address the drought problem. Similarly, we wish to thank the international community for its demonstration of solidarity with our region at a time of desperate need.

The Kingdom of Lesotho welcomes the Secretary-General's report entitled "An Agenda for Peace" (A/47/277). This document contains far-reaching recommendations on peacemaking, peace-building and peace-keeping. However, the implementation of these recommendations will fall short of attaining the intended results fully if they are not complemented with efforts to harness and reverse the further deterioration in peoples' socio-economic situations. It is on this basis that my delegation lends its full support to General Assembly resolution 47/181 on the "Agenda for Development". We stand ready to engage in constructive debate on the Secretary-General's preliminary report on "An Agenda for Development".

The world today faces profound changes, which are fuelled by the deep desire of people across the globe for respect for their basic human rights, for democracy, for public accountability and good governance. The democratically elected Government of the Kingdom of Lesotho embraces the idea and concept of national reconciliation, for which the people of Lesotho have yearned for so long. The Government has also embarked on a vigorous campaign to inculcate and nurture the culture of democracy, respect for basic human rights and popular participation, which should, in turn, have an impact on social mobilization for development, democratic institution-building, political stability and national prosperity.

The new Government views the 1993 general election and the overwhelming popular mandate it received for the stewardship of the nation's affairs as a golden opportunity to address, with fresh impetus, the urgent national issues of poverty, ignorance and disease. We therefore wish to make a special appeal to the donor community to lend a helping hand to our efforts in this regard, in the considered belief that democracy and development are complementary.

On behalf of the Government and the peace-loving people of Lesotho, I wish to express our gratitude for the prompt and generous support and assistance we received from the international community towards the success of our return to democratic civilian rule.

The situation in South Africa is always a cause for concern in Lesotho, as South Africa is our only immediate neighbour. Despite our concern with the ever-rising levels of violence and the increasing resolve by the right-wing elements to engage in sabotage in South Africa, we are encouraged by what has been achieved through negotiations in that country. In particular, we applaud the agreement reached by the negotiating parties on the date of the end of April 1994 for the holding of the first democratic elections as well as the establishment of the Transitional Executive Council to oversee the transitional arrangements prior to elections. While we acknowledge and support the call for the lifting of economic sanctions against South Africa, we urge the United Nations to upgrade the United Nations monitoring team in South Africa in order to give effective meaning to the Secretary-General's report "An Agenda for Peace" and its central message of preventive diplomacy, peace-building and peacemaking.

It is our fervent hope that the lessons of the Kingdom of Lesotho's peaceful transition to democracy will not be lost on the citizens of South Africa, whose own chance to elect a Government of their choice for the first time seems within reach.

The people of Angola, another sister country in the subregion, continue to be denied a chance for peace by UNITA. We condemn UNITA for the escalation of the military actions and for the continued massacre of innocent civilians and the destruction of the infrastructure in Angola. We appreciate the efforts of the Secretary-General and take note of Security Council resolution 851 (1993), which imposes a number of sanctions intended to limit the ability of UNITA to continue with its war effort.

We also wish to applaud the decision by the United States to recognize and establish diplomatic contact with the Government of Angola, as well as the subsequent positive initiatives for peace taken by the United States in Angola.

Mozambique is currently enjoying relative peace. The General Peace Agreement signed in Rome is holding, and the parties have continued to exercise restraint. We appeal to the parties concerned to implement the peace accords without delay and to cooperate with the Secretary-General's Special Representative in full, including the timely implementation of the mandate of the United Nations Operation in Mozambique.

In Liberia, we are optimistic that the collaboration between the United Nations Observer Mission in Liberia (UNOMIL) and the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) Military Observer Group (ECOMOG), together with the Peace Agreement signed in Cotonou in July 1993, will bring lasting peace and that the warring factions will stop hostilities and agree on a transitional arrangement to lead the country to democratic elections.

Last, but not least, it is heartening to see real hope of a solution to one of the bloodiest, most impassioned and most obdurate conflicts of our time in the Middle East. The signing last month of the peace accord between the State of Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization is a victory for common sense and the validation of peaceful methods in resolving disputes between States. The virtue of this mutual achievement is that it puts coexistence to a test in reality and not in mere exchange of rhetoric.

None of this, however, should distract the world from the reaffirmation of the right of the Palestinian people to nationhood in accordance with the relevant Security Council resolutions.

During the World Conference on Human Rights, held in June this year, the whole world converged in Vienna to discuss human rights issues. Although the World Conference was inundated with diverse interpretations of human rights, a great deal of progress was made. My delegation believes that the international community should rededicate itself to the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action as the central document in the effective implementation of existing human rights instruments and commit itself to the principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

In conclusion, my delegation would wish to emphasize once again that it remains for us to join hands and strive resolutely in all spheres of human endeavour to ensure the very survival of current and succeeding generations. Let this Organization remain the burning light of hope and inspiration for all mankind. For all its differences, and for all its diversity, ours is a world of interdependence and destinies inextricably joined. Let us renew our resolve to pursue to the end the lofty purposes and principles of the Charter of our Organization.

Mr. Tau (Republic of Moldova): First of all, I join previous speakers in warmly congratulating Mr. Samuel Insanally on his election as President of the forty-eighth session of the General Assembly, and wish him success in performing this highly responsible function. At the same time, I address sincere thanks to Mr. Stoyan Ganev for the competent manner in which he led this great forum during his presidency.

I also take great pleasure in expressing my gratitude to the Secretary-General, Mr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali, for his tireless efforts aimed at enhancing the efficiency of the United Nations.

I take this opportunity to convey cordial congratulations to the Czech Republic, the Slovak Republic, The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Eritrea, Andorra and Monaco on their admission to the United Nations.

Recent political developments in a number of States and at the international level brought about the end of the cold war, the abatement of the danger of a nuclear catastrophe and some other positive changes. Unfortunately, we are compelled to note at the same time the emergence of some negative phenomena, such as disastrous regional and inter-ethnic conflicts. The end of this century presents a terrible picture: countries and people torn apart by fierce fratricidal wars, towns and villages set on fire, thousands of displaced people and refugees, innocent victims, tearful women and children.

The serious and complicated problems of our times - for example, those rooted in history or border disputes, and those with ethnic and religious, political and economic, social and spiritual origins, have generated various conflicts with grave consequences. These problems may lead to the outbreak of new violent confrontations in Europe that could endanger international peace and security. Under these circumstances, which are indisputable, the United Nations and other international organizations, such as the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE), the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), the Western European Union (WEU) and the European Economic Community (EEC) have a crucial role in stopping these unfavourable developments by the peaceful settlement of conflicts, thus leading to the strengthening of peace, international stability and security.

While appreciating the European efforts to find an adequate response to new challenges to security and stability, both at the global and regional levels, we consider that the role of the United Nations in this respect remains decisive. In order to meet the new imperatives, the United Nations ought to undergo a profound reorganization and a careful reassessment of its means. The report of the Secretary-General, "An Agenda for Peace", represents a reference point in the modern history of the United Nations and the starting-point of these necessary changes. We welcome the continuation and broadening of the debates on this matter.

The recent outbreak of regional conflicts - the Yugoslav crisis in particular - reveals certain deficiencies in the international machinery dealing with peace and security issues, and indicates an urgent need for improvement.

The Republic of Moldova supports the reforms initiated within the framework of the Organization and is confident of its ability to adapt itself to the new political climate.

The appointment of an Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs strengthens this confidence. In our opinion, the programme of reforms should include the following three priorities: restructuring the Secretariat, rationalizing the work of the Main Committees and their working mechanisms, and reinforcing the role of the

Secretary-General in his relations with the subsidiary bodies and specialized agencies.

I should like to point out that our delegation has been pursuing with great interest the debates on the agenda item entitled "Question of equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Security Council". We consider that an increase in the membership of the Council aimed at ensuring wider representation would be in full consonance with the major changes that have occurred lately in the international arena and would reflect to a much greater extent the present level of democratization in international relations. At the same time, we share the opinion that any changes should maintain and increase the efficiency of this vital organ of the United Nations, taking into account a further possible recourse to the remarkable contributions by major Powers.

Over two years have passed since the Republic of Moldova proclaimed its independence. Our aspiration to become a democratic State with a market economy is absolute, notwithstanding the difficulties of transition. Our country has taken the first steps in this direction, irreversibly engaging itself on the path towards democracy. This resolute choice is reflected in our endeavours to join in international cooperation, an integral part of which is respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms.

The Republic of Moldova has ratified the international conventions on human rights. The Government has consistently come out in favour of assuming new commitments to adapt the Republic's internal legal framework to international standards.

This position of principle on human rights on the part of the Republic of Moldova was reiterated at the World Conference on Human Rights. Unfortunately, this constructive approach has been vehemently challenged by the separatist forces in Transdniestra, which are being inspired and supported from abroad. Shortly after the proclamation of independence, the pro-imperial forces started hostilities that resulted in great losses of innocent lives and flagrant violations of the basic rights of the native population, who were born and bred in areas controlled by separatists.

The allegations by certain political forces and mass media in the Russian Federation that the conflict is an inter-ethnic one are simply not true. In fact, it is a political conflict aimed at rebuilding the imperial structure. These accusations by the pro-imperial forces are meant to lead people to the conclusion that human rights are being violated in the Republic of Moldova and that ethnic groups had been subject to discrimination. In this respect, I should point out that these accusations were not confirmed by the United Nations and Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE) missions that visited my country on several occasions.

Those same accusations were the pretext for the Russian Federation's decision to keep up a presence by its armed forces on my country's territory. The conditions imposed for the withdrawal of the Russian Fourteenth Army, namely that special legal status must be granted to the eastern districts of Moldova, is an attempt to keep that geographical area - including the Republic of Moldova - in Russia's sphere of influence.

The presence of foreign military forces on the territory of the Republic of Moldova is the principal source of insecurity and instability for my country. As was so rightly pointed out by the Secretary-General in his report on the work of the Organization, the question of the withdrawal of the Fourteenth Russian Army is a major stumbling-block along the way to a settlement of the conflict.

In this context, I should like to thank the European Community which, in their memorandum to the General Assembly, called for an early withdrawal of foreign troops from Moldova. In fact, the Fourteenth Army has huge amounts of military hardware and enormous weapons stockpiles in Transdniestra that could easily be taken over by separatist forces: this is what happened during the escalation of hostilities in 1992.

Moreover, many residents of the eastern districts continue to be illegally drafted into the Fourteenth Army. This is another example of crude interference in the internal affairs of the Republic of Moldova, and is a serious violation of international law.

Thus, with the political, logistic and moral support of the Fourteenth Army, the separatist leaders are still doing everything they can to impede the talks on a political settlement of the conflict. This has prevented the implementation of the Moldovan-Russian agreement of 21 July 1992 on the principles for a peaceful settlement of the military conflict in the eastern districts of the Republic of Moldova.

The high degree of politicization of the foreign military forces stationed on my country's territory and their support for the anticonstitutional regime in Transdniestra

are the main threats to the independence, integrity and security of the Republic of Moldova. At the same time, the presence of a foreign army in Moldova is the major obstacle to a peaceful settlement of the conflict in the eastern districts. We therefore consider unacceptable the Russian Federation's insistent proposals for it to be entrusted with a United Nations mandate for peace-keeping operations in conflict zones throughout the former Soviet Union.

First, we are convinced that neither the CSCE nor the United Nations have exhausted possibilities for solving these regional conflicts.

Secondly, one of the basic criteria for participation in peace-keeping operations is impartiality. In view of Russia's obvious interest in these zones and its insistence on assuming the role of peace-keeper, it is clear that these efforts are aimed at continuing and justifying its military presence on the territories of independent and sovereign States Members of the United Nations. Russia's final goal is obviously the revival of the old imperial structures with the blessing of the international community.

The acceptance of the 14th Army's presence on the territory of the Republic of Moldova as a precedent will certainly be very dangerous, not only for the territories of the newly independent States but also for all the adjacent areas.

The negotiations between the Governments of the Republic of Moldova and the Russian Federation - which began last year - on settling the terms for the withdrawal of the 14th Army have not attained any significant results. The Russian side obstructs the negotiations and displays no willingness to withdraw its military forces. In these circumstances, the CSCE mission in the Republic of Moldova suggested that it participate in these negotiations. While the Moldovan party supported this initiative, the Russian party rejected it on every occasion. We note with deep concern that the constructive attitude in favour of compromise taken by the leadership of the Republic of Moldova is being repaid with a policy of *fait accompli* meant to separate the Transdniester area from Moldova and place a "Trojan horse" in my country.

The recent developments are relevant in this sense and deepen this concern. General Alexandr Lebed, the commander of the 14th Army was recently elected, with the tacit consent of Moscow authorities, a deputy to the so-called Supreme Soviet in the "partial elections" that took place in the self-proclaimed "Dniester Republic". In this way General Lebed has proved once again his lack of good faith and his total disregard for the provisions of the agreements signed by Presidents Mircea Snegur and Boris Yeltsin.

The Government of the Republic of Moldova considers that the defiant and cynical actions of General Lebed, who is a Russian citizen and the commander of a foreign army temporarily stationed on the territory of my country, constitute blatant interference in the internal affairs of a sovereign State. This action is a new attempt by certain conservative forces in Russia to recognize de facto the so-called Dniester Republic.

It would probably be enlightening to recall that the self-proclaimed authorities in Transdniestria applauded with enthusiasm the putsch against Mikhail Gorbachev in August 1991. Moreover, during the recent events in Moscow, troops from Transdniestria were sent to the Russian capital to join the Communist hardliners in their fight against President Boris Yeltsin. The active participation of Transdniestrian fighters in the Moscow rebellion was a logical consequence of the close ties between the Tiraspol leadership and the reactionary Russian parliament, which violated all international norms under the false slogan of "defending the Russians" by means of the so-called Dniester Republic and, in practice, created a bridgehead in Moldova for the restoration of the Soviet empire.

In this context, I should like to inform the international community that the situation in the area of conflict continues to be tense and is very likely to become unstable.

We have all accepted the general principle that a foreign army cannot be stationed on the territory of another State without the consent of the Government of the host country. I should also like to recall the appeals contained in the documents of the CSCE and the North Atlantic Cooperation Council, stating the need for complete, immediate and unconditional withdrawal of the 14th Army. In this spirit, we urge United Nations Member States to examine, with understanding and good will, a possible request for the inclusion of an additional item on the agenda of the General Assembly, on the question of the complete withdrawal of foreign military forces from the territory of the Republic of Moldova.

It is my belief that the same laudable solidarity expressed by the international community with the Baltic States is urgently needed by my country, which is

prevented from achieving real independence and pursuing its firm choice of democracy and freedom. We reiterate our support for resolution 47/21, on the complete withdrawal of foreign military forces from the territories of the Baltic States, and we welcome with great satisfaction the encouraging achievement of the Lithuanian people, which has finally seen its territory free of foreign troops. We deem that only the concerted action of international bodies, especially that of the CSCE and the United Nations, can ensure peace and security in our region and protect the territorial integrity and independence of the Republic of Moldova.

I wish to assure this body that my Government is fully committed to doing its utmost to protect the rights of minorities in the Republic of Moldova and is ready to receive any international monitoring mission to ascertain the real situation.

I cherish the hope that the fresh spirit emerging at the United Nations will help us to identify, by consensus, the necessary solutions for various problems the international community is facing now. My delegation is ready to make its contribution to the carrying out of efficient cooperation with other Member States in order to achieve the lofty goals of the United Nations that we are all striving for.

The meeting rose at 11.50 a.m.

United Nations
GENERAL ASSEMBLY
FORTY-EIGHTH SESSION

Official Records

23rd PLENARY MEETING
Friday, 8 OCtober 1993
at 3 p.m.

NEW YORK

President: Mr. INSANALLY (Guyana)

The meeting was called to order at 3.25 p.m.

AGENDA ITEM 9 *(continued)*

GENERAL DEBATE

Mr. BEN MOUSSA (Comoros) *(interpretation from French)*: In addressing this Assembly for the first time, I am pleased to extend to you, Sir, the congratulations of the delegation of the Islamic Federal Republic of the Comoros, which I have the honour to head, on your outstanding election to the presidency of the General Assembly at its forty-eighth session. In our view, your moral and intellectual qualities and your extensive experience in international affairs are clear guarantees of the success of our work. I assure you that my delegation is fully prepared to assist you as you undertake your noble mission.

I should like to join those representatives who have congratulated your predecessor, Mr. Stoyan Ganev of Bulgaria, on his effective leadership of the Assembly during its forty-seventh session.

Let me take this opportunity also to express a warm welcome to the new States Members of the Organization.

The multifaceted action of the United Nations over the numerous years of its existence has given us a true appreciation of the institution's major role, as well as of the worth of the men who, during that time, have borne the responsibility for it. This is why my delegation expresses satisfaction at seeing Mr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali at the head of the Organization. We pay a resounding tribute to him for his dedication and determination to work for peace and the well-being of mankind.

Forty-eight years after its creation, and despite a particularly difficult international situation, our Organization is still struggling to discharge properly the lofty and onerous mission entrusted to it. Equally, with the passage of time, its activity has escalated and become more diversified. Unfortunately, we are today obliged to note that the United Nations is increasingly confronted by enormous financial difficulties, which hamper its proper functioning. The financial crisis that it is experiencing stems primarily from the crushing imbalance between its various tasks and its scanty financial means.

Thus, in the area of peace-keeping, the United Nations is responsible for numerous rather costly operations, while, in several regions of the world, hotbeds of tension and increasing instability seem to presage other difficult situations that are likely to transcend the boundaries of the Organization's ordinary or traditional role. The task is huge, and we must not remain passive in the face of such suffering. It is therefore up to all Member States to contribute effectively to securing an improvement in the Organization's peace-keeping system.

While, within the framework of the work of this forty-eighth session, we are still reviewing a multitude of problems to which we must find solutions, let us recognize that the session does have the advantage of being held at a time when, for the first time in more than 40 years, we are seeing encouraging and promising results with regard to the developments in respect of the problem of Palestine.

The Government of the Comoros would like, through me, to congratulate the signatories of the Washington

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93-86807 (E)

Distr. GENERAL

A/48/PV.23
29 October 1993

ENGLISH

agreement. It provides grounds for hope that this mutual recognition and the autonomy of certain territories represent an unquestionable guarantee of the establishment of a sovereign and independent Palestinian State, so that this part of the world, which for so long has been disrupted by war, can finally experience peace and stability. We pay a well-deserved tribute to the Chairman of the Palestine Liberation Organization for his perseverance in defending the rights of the brotherly Palestinian people, whose just struggle we have always supported.

In the same context, my country has great hopes for the negotiations between the South African authorities and the representatives of the black majority. My country sincerely hopes that these negotiations will culminate in the establishment of a truly united, multiracial and democratic South African society.

It is clear that action by the various United Nations authorities has made a considerable contribution to strengthening the credibility of our Organization and the confidence the international community has in it. On the other hand, the rebirth of democracy in Eastern Europe, the opening up of Africa to a multiparty system and the relaxation of tensions among the super-Powers are also factors which should give us hope for a better world. But how can we not be concerned or doubtful when in some parts of the world there are still hotbeds of tension and fratricidal wars? In fact, the deterioration of the situation in Somalia, with all its consequences, in particular the mass displacement of the population and the murder of those who are defending peace, calls for ever greater vigilance and solidarity on our part. It is time for the international community to take effective action with a view to the holding of a conference of national reconciliation to put an end to this war. It is also crucial that States and international organizations continue to render their valuable assistance to these peoples, who are in dire need.

With regard to Africa, I am concerned about our neighbours in Mozambique, in Angola, in Liberia and in all of these countries where human dignity and conscience are being jeopardized, where, unfortunately, dialogue is yielding to force and violence. The Federal Islamic Republic of the Comoros is launching a fraternal appeal to these countries to consider the consequences of these wars for the future of their peoples and of Africa as a whole, and hopes that reason will finally prevail.

Moreover, we are still deeply concerned at the present situation in the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina. The external aggression perpetrated against this independent and sovereign State requires that our Organization, and in particular the Security Council, the major organ responsible for the maintenance of peace, take the necessary action to save that country. We fully support the resolutions of the Security Council concerning this problem, in particular resolution 859 (1993), in which it called

> "for an immediate cease-fire and cessation of hostilities throughout the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina as essential for achieving a just and equitable political solution to the conflict in Bosnia and Herzegovina through peaceful negotiations".

On the other hand, the Federal Islamic Republic of the Comoros is supporting the efforts of our Organization to find a lasting solution to the Korean problem. My country urges the parties involved to implement measures to facilitate the reunification of this country, whose people have suffered for so long from being divided.

Environmental problems are a concern of the international community, which is aware of the adverse consequences of the destruction of the ozone layer and the deterioration of the ecological milieu. It is in this spirit that our States are adopting strategies and policies aimed at safeguarding the environment. Convinced that one cannot separate the environment from development, our Governments must establish procedures and devise national frameworks which will give priority to sustainable development, in accordance with the recommendations of the Rio Conference. Along these lines, the Federal Islamic Republic of the Comoros, with a view to combating the problems of pollution, deforestation and the destruction of natural species, has given priority in its development plan to the preservation of the environment and its natural resources.

Another area to which we should devote specific interest is that of human rights. By the adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in December 1948, the international community, through the General Assembly of our Organization, for the first time in the history of mankind, shouldered the permanent responsibility of publicizing and championing human rights. Today more than ever before, we continue to have confidence in our Organization, which has always known how to stress the concept of fundamental human rights and freedoms and has made ensuring them one of its fundamental goals. It is therefore important for the United Nations to give priority to human rights programmes There is also a need, within the framework of national policy, to implement and create institutional conditions that would guarantee respect for human dignity.

The World Conference on Human Rights, held recently in Vienna, Austria, allowed the international community to reaffirm its unswerving dedication to respect for inalienable human rights. However, it is our Organization that must see to the implementation of the Vienna recommendations.

We cannot separate the concept of human rights from the concept of democracy, for we cannot conceive of a democracy that would ignore or fail to guarantee human rights and freedoms. This is why our Organization should show particular interest in the changes taking place throughout the world, changes which are, *inter alia*, reflected in the collapse of dictatorships and the emergence of democratic political regimes. The United Nations must encourage and support actions aimed at advancing the democratic process.

As members are aware, the wind of freedom and democracy that has wafted through the world has spared no continent. Thus, in the Federal Islamic Republic of the Comoros, the time has come for democracy and a multiparty system. We have engaged in a revision of our Constitution in order to adapt it to the realities of today's world, with the active participation of all national political movements. We are moving towards legislative and regional elections to give the country all the institutions required by a State of law.

You will agree with me, Mr. President, that this transitional stage of our young democracy is difficult. We are, however, aware that it must be passed through in order to achieve a harmonization of the democratic process as a whole. The Government of the Islamic Federal Republic of the Comoros, concerned for the well-being of its people, is sparing no effort to create conditions which promote respect for human dignity and the maintenance of political and social stability in the country.

Such an undertaking requires the assistance of peace- and progress-loving countries and organizations, to help our country effectively manage these freedoms, and to place our young democracy on a solid foundation.

We cannot close this political chapter without recalling another problem, a non-violent one, certainly but no less important: that of the Comorian island of Mayotte. This question will be the subject of a debate in the Assembly, as it is at each of our regular sessions. That is why I will spare the Assembly a list of the facts behind this thorny issue. But I express again the full readiness of the Government of His Excellency Mr. Said Mohamed Djohar and the Comorian people to give the highest priority to dialogue and concerted action to resolve this regrettable dispute which we have had with France since we attained our sovereignty.

There is no need to emphasize that the new international political landscape at the end of the century makes the interdependence of peoples and the solidarity of nations the irreplaceable and only means by which we can guarantee the economic and social development of our States.

Unfortunately, international economic relations are still marked by the bipolar attitude responsible for the growing gap between rich and poor countries. We must now change this attitude - an outcome of the cold war - as a result of which the rich have been becoming even richer and the poor even poorer, and create harmonious conditions for global economic relations. We believe in the ideals of peace and security, but we are firmly convinced that they cannot be fully achieved if famine, malnutrition, disease and natural disasters continue to be the lot of the majority of the States which make up the international community.

The future of the developing countries continues to be a priority of the various specialized institutions of our Organization, but the failure of various development programmes and strategies initiated in our respective countries is no secret. That fact compels us to give thought together to ways and means to relaunch a different type of development, of which our Organization must be the catalyst.

The advent of a new economic world order is more likely today than yesterday, despite a crisis that is weakening the financial Powers, de facto reducing their capacity to give development assistance. We understand the new obligations of the big Powers, faced with unemployment, reduced productivity and the need to support the new States born of the fragmentation of the eastern bloc. But it is up to them to give a new impetus to vertical cooperation, in order to enable the countries of the South to extricate themselves from chaos.

In that spirit, the developing countries have indeed learned the lesson that they must rely on themselves first and foremost. This is why, from Africa to the Orient, structures are emerging whose objective is to assure regional economic integration. The establishment of the African Economic Community will meet Africa's need for an instrument for functional cooperation which can

harmonize development and cooperation between the States of this continent, the breadbasket of the world.

For the Islamic Federal Republic of the Comoros, cooperation with the developing countries is an essential element in such cooperative relations. My country is one of those which are convinced that South-South cooperation can be an important factor in rebalancing world economic relations.

In its continuous development efforts the Islamic Federal Republic of the Comoros is focusing on freeing and restructuring development support institutions. In the spirit of this impetus towards socio-economic recovery, we have agreed with the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank on a structural adjustment programme whose success depends on the full and active support of the international community.

As the century draws to a close, the world is experiencing profound changes in the ideological, political, economic, social, scientific and technical spheres. The problems it is facing require consideration at the global level from now on. International solidarity compels us to act in greater cooperation in managing world affairs.

We have the instrument for this: the United Nations. But we are among those who believe that if it is to be more effective the Organization and its specialized agencies must be transformed to adapt to the tremendous democratic dynamism of the new international system. In order to give the United Nations the political power for real decision-making, the Security Council must genuinely represent the world as it is today.

Mr. Abdullah (Oman) (*interpretation from Arabic*): On behalf of the Government of the Sultanate of Oman, allow me at the outset to convey to your Excellency our sincere congratulations and to express our pleasure on your election as President of the forty-eighth session of the General Assembly. I am confident that thanks to your well-known competence and diplomatic skills, our deliberations will reach a successful and meaningful conclusion.

Permit me also to take this opportunity to extend profound gratitude and appreciation to your predecessor, Mr. Stoyan Ganev, for the exemplary manner in which he steered the work of the forty-seventh session.

At this point, I feel it is important to refer to the Secretary-General's comprehensive report (A/48/1) issued in September 1993, which dealt with the activities of the United Nations and the issues and concerns on its agenda. In particular, I wish to refer to paragraphs 353 to 366 regarding the situation between Iraq and Kuwait.

We highly commend the Secretary-General, Mr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali, for his great efforts, and we shall be looking forward to contributing, with all Member States, in achieving a unified stand that will ultimately lead to an integrated approach of coordination, understanding and cooperation towards the advancement of our goals of development, peace and stability.

This session is convened at a time when the hopes and expectations of all peoples are geared towards a new phase of constructive international cooperation between the Members of the United Nations, whose number has been increasing annually. In this context, our country welcomes the admission of Eritrea to the membership of the United Nations after its accession to independence through its people's decades-long struggle. Eritrea is a country with which we have cultural and historical ties and with which we share aspirations after stability and peace. My country also welcomes the admission of the Czech Republic and the Slovak Republic as Members of the international organization and commends them for having settled their political problems peacefully and avoided conflicts, bloodshed and suffering. We also welcome the admission of the Republic of Macedonia, Andorra and Monaco to our Organization. We are confident that the enlargement of our international family will give us more strength and confidence in undertaking further innovative international cooperation.

These countries joined the United Nations after they had gained their independence through the long and painful struggle of their peoples during the cold war and the period that was overshadowed by conflict between the great Powers. Today, in the post-cold-war world, we see positive political developments taking place. In addition to the emergence of several sovereign nations, we have seen great political developments which give us renewed hope that a new world will be established on the basis of brotherhood and cooperation instead of conflict and bloodshed, a world in which wounds are healed.

Our presence here underscores our conviction that the General Assembly is the unique international forum for discussing and exchanging views among all Member States, regardless of their size or strength. As Members of the United Nations, we must engage in positive talks and negotiations with the purpose of settling international problems.

This forty-eighth session of the General Assembly is held under circumstances that should encourage us to establish a set of advanced rules that would govern international relations. This we should do by taking advantage of the newly acquired capability of the United Nations to enforce the rule of the law in peacemaking and peace-keeping the world over. We are confident that our Organization, which shoulders a heavy burden of serious responsibility will be able to rise to the challenges that face it, so long as the international community continues to be committed to and redoubles its efforts in supporting the United Nations and the principles it stands for.

There is no doubt that, the success of the United Nations depends on the coordinated efforts of Member States in addressing the outstanding issues and crises which must be solved collectively in the cause of building our new world order. There is an urgent need for the organs of the United Nations to provide positive conditions and effective mechanisms before the United Nations is required to deal with any regional or international crisis. We are convinced that no matter how far apart the positions of the parties to any conflict are, they will not reject intervention by the United Nations if the intervention is timely and appropriate. In any case, the tasks of the United Nations should be exclusively in the areas of achieving peace and providing humanitarian assistance.

The march towards peace between the two peoples of Palestine and Israel has just begun. The first important step has been taken towards the comprehensive solution for which we have long waited. The United Nations which, together with all its organs, played a prominent role in the Arab-Israeli conflict should feel a sense of satisfaction at what has been achieved. However, much work lies ahead for the United Nations and its organs in pursuing and preserving this historic agreement that will benefit not only the people of the Middle East, but the entire world as well. It is high time the Palestinian people put behind them their long-drawn-out suffering and looked forward to economic and social development under the new world order.

The Palestinian-Israeli agreement has paved the way towards other agreements between the Arabs and Israel. However, we should not be over-optimistic. The residues of bitter conflict are there, and unless the peoples and States of the Middle East are fully taken care of, those residues will constitute real obstacles which will make difficult the achievement of the goal we all aspire after.

The leaders of the Palestinian and Israeli peoples have shouldered their responsibilities and have done what was expected of them. Now it is the responsibility of all States of the world to maintain and preserve this achievement. It is not enough to extend congratulations to those leaders or to give them our moral support. The United Nations must take positive complementary steps towards sponsoring projects from which they could benefit economically and socially.

My country has voiced its support for this agreement between Israel and Palestine. We are very pleased to welcome this accord and look forward to a comprehensive peace agreement that would guarantee the mutual interests, rights and benefits of all parties on the basis of the implementation of United Nations Security Council resolutions 242 (1967), 338 (1973), 425 (1978) and the principle of land for peace.

Thus, we call upon all States Members of the United Nations to support this process. We look forward to any positive contribution to any role played by the United Nations in making the peace we hope for.

Regional cooperation in the area of economic and social development will always be an indispensable prerequisite of any new order in the Middle-East region. In order for the new dawn of peace which has just emerged with the signature of the historic agreement between the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) and Israel to continue, develop and become a reality, the international community has assisted in rehabilitating the countries that suffered from the war situation which, until recently, prevailed in the region. In this context, while we pay special attention to supporting the Palestinian people's progress to self-determination, we must also bear in mind the urgent need of the Lebanese people for assistance and help them rebuild their economic and social infrastructures. Whatever assistance the international community can offer by way of economic and administrative support will provide the foundation for hope in a future of peace.

The Middle-East region is not the only part of the world where optimism is diluted by fear. In many other parts of the world, the United Nations is deploying efforts that aim at tipping the scales in favour of optimism against anxiety and fear.

In this context, while we value the United Nations efforts in Somalia, we believe that such efforts should be based on concordance between the United Nations and the different Somali factions. The success of the United Nations operations in Somalia depends on the cooperation that can be achieved between the United Nations and the Somali factions. The restoration of peace and stability cannot be achieved unless all Somali factions commit

themselves to cooperate effectively with the United Nations in addressing the problems and difficulties that face the Somali people.

On the European continent, the international community continues to witness another serious and highly sensitive problem, namely the situation in the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina. There is no doubt that it is the European countries that bear the responsibility of addressing the humanitarian, political, security and economic aspects of this problem.

The principles of human rights, justice and equality have always been the lofty ideals that civilized Europe preached and called upon the world to adhere to. Paradoxically, the world has yet to see those lofty principles being put into practice and translated into measures that would rescue the people of Bosnia and Herzegovina from their agony and from injustice and persecution. Although Europe is making efforts to steer the warring factions towards reconciliation, the fact that Europe has failed to take a decisive stand on the basis of justice and equality has made the continuing tragedy of the people of Bosnia and Herzegovina doubly dangerous as its persistence may very well encourage the forces of evil and oppression in other parts of the world to take heart and follow in the footsteps of the aggressors in Bosnia and Herzegovina. As a matter of fact, we are beginning to witness examples of such behaviour, in the strife between Azerbaijan and Armenia, in the continuing plight of Georgia, in the explosive situation in Tajikistan, and in the continuing civil war in Angola and in many other war-stricken areas, hotbeds of tension which may explode at any moment and threaten world peace and security.

Some of those problems, as well as many others, are left-overs from the cold war conflicts. They persist in various forms and put a heavy burden on the United Nations and its organs. As I said earlier, this international Organization, with its present capabilities, cannot shoulder its responsibilities as vigorously as it should if it is to achieve full success in restoring stability whenever one of those problems explodes. Therefore, we believe that the United Nations should concentrate on issues of a humanitarian nature which attract a measure of regional and international consensus that would support United Nations action. It must be realized that if the United Nations goes on taking it upon itself to address the world's problems all in one go, it will squander its capabilities and will risk failure. It is therefore most important to establish a mechanism that would coordinate the efforts of the United Nations and the regional organizations in addressing such problems and crises.

We, as members of this international Organization, are enthusiastic and eager to develop the current mechanisms of the United Nations so that the Organization may be able to continue to play an essential and dynamic role in the world of tomorrow that should be built on the principles of dialogue and cooperation between countries and regional economic groups. Economic development and scientific progress will be principal features of that future world. Hence the pressing need for re-examining the economic structures of the various regimes that existed during the cold war era. Such re-examination should be guided primarily by the principles of free-market mechanisms and oriented towards freeing the potential of third-world countries to acquire advanced technology in order for those countries to be able to develop their resources and market their products without any economic barriers or restrictions. This, in our view, will help consolidate the world economic order and contribute to the world economic recovery from the recession that is currently wreaking havoc on the economies of the developed countries.

Cognizant of the growing interdependence and globalization of the world economy, the Sultanate of Oman contributes vigorously in this direction. For instance, in cooperation with large international institutions, the Sultanate of Oman has been involved in petrol resources development projects in Kazakhstan and the Russian Federation with the aim, *inter alia*, of assisting in the development and improvement of the economies of these countries which we believe could ultimately lead to greater general security and stability.

The Sultanate of Oman believes that the increasingly interdependent nature of the world economy is a major development in the post cold war era. We shall, therefore, work with our neighbours and partners to promote mutual economic prosperity. Our initiative towards building a strategic pipeline to transfer natural gas to the peninsula of the Indian subcontinent aims at fostering the economic growth of fraternal countries in that region. We call upon the world to take collective action towards alleviating poverty and hunger, which are the two main sources of regional tensions and political upheavals.

Allow me to take this opportunity to convey, on behalf of my Government, my sincere appreciation to the members of the Asian Group for their support and endorsement of the candidature of the Sultanate of Oman for membership in the Security Council during the period of 1994-1995. By the same token, my heartfelt gratitude goes to those countries and other groups which supported the candidature of my country. I should like to assure our

supporters and all Member States that from the very beginning of its membership, the Sultanate of Oman will do its utmost to contribute to the achievement of the objectives of the United Nations, particularly in the area of establishing and maintaining peace.

With the desire for membership in the Security Council comes a strong awareness of the special responsibilities entrusted to the members of the Council. We commit ourselves to work collectively to achieve the effectiveness required for the implementation of the Security Council's resolutions and the success of the Secretary-General's efforts.

The Sultanate of Oman feels special responsibility towards its youth and their future, as they are the future generation that will work to maintain the new world order. For this reason, my country, based on its demographic profile, has given priority to the promotion of youth programs in its developmental, social and economic plans. We look forward to cooperating with other States through the United Nations in pursuing activities particularly aimed at the welfare of the youth of our communities.

In this context, I am delighted to highlight the September 1993 report of the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) which describes the achievements of countries in the spheres of health and welfare of children. The report states that the Sultanate of Oman ranked first among Middle Eastern and North African countries and second world wide in the reduction of the child mortality rate for under fives. Moreover, the Sultanate of Oman occupied the first place among Middle Eastern and North African countries in the provision of vaccinations against measles. In the field of education, 91 per cent of our five-year-old children are attending elementary school, a statistic which exceeds regional and international averages.

We shall continue to improve on these achievements through the fruitful cooperation between the Sultanate of Oman and the organs of the United Nations, especially UNICEF, in the field of health programmes that would ensure children's welfare and development to our satisfaction. We view such efforts as good examples of how international cooperation can be seen to bring positive and beneficial results to our communities. We shall endeavour to achieve even better results in this area.

While we continue to focus on our youth, we also work simultaneously and enthusiastically to conserve the environment in order to ensure a healthy and better place for the next generation. In this regard, I should like to inform the General Assembly that my country has recently become part of the Vienna Convention for the Protection of the Ozone Layer and the Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer. This is in line with our conviction that the international agreements on the environment and our commitment to such agreements are the right way to protect this planet and its resources.

The environment, on which survival on this planet depends, is still beset by pollution and the exhaustion of essential resources. Such a situation undermines the prosperity of the inhabitants of the planet. Without operational and effective economic plans for the implementation of, and the relevant special procedures for, the environment conservation programme, the prospects of success for our efforts will be meagre indeed.

As in other areas, the differing levels of economic development from one country to the other lie behind environmental problems. We believe that the prevailing chronic recession in the world has not made it feasible to re-examine and redefine our economic priorities. However, there is a pressing and urgent need for such re-examination to be carried out against the backdrop of the environmental and economic challenges now facing us.

The recession that now plagues the industrialized countries has resulted from the deterioration of growth rates in the Third World countries. We hope that the developed countries will realize the importance of allowing the developing countries to revitalize their economies so that the economic order may regain the balance between the supply side upon which the economies of the industrialized countries depend and the demand side which constitutes the basis of the economic growth of the Third World countries.

We are concerned that if the developed countries are not fully responsive to and supportive of the essential requirements of economic recovery in the Third World countries, the present world economic situation will ultimately lead to a cancerous recession that will affect the whole world and lead to disastrously negative consequences.

Finally, it must be said that despite all this, we should tip the scales in favour of optimism regarding the prospects of building a new world of peace, brotherhood and prosperity. Regardless of the many hotbeds of regional and ethnic conflicts, we are confident that our constructive discussions at this session and at all levels will ensure the emergence of a better world in the coming century that will be free of all the tragic negative residues of the past. Our best guarantee that it will be so is that our common

future will depend on positive cooperation between all countries in the interests of international stability and prosperity under the rule of law and in consonance with the behests of justice and sagacity.

Mr. NIEHAUS QUESADA (Costa Rica) *(interpretation from Spanish)*: It has been four years since the end of the cold war and the fall of the old ideological order. Four years ago we were told that war and global confrontation had ended and that history itself had come to an end, giving way to a new age. Today, yesterday's hopes and illusions are confronted by a reality with which we are all familiar. What is keeping us from turning our world into a fertile field and a common abode for all human beings?

These meetings are taking place at a time when a feeling of hope animates the hearts of men. The agreements signed between Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization have shown that peace is possible and that living in harmony does not require portentous events, but only awareness and willingness. We all know that these first agreements, if respected by both parties, can lead to a new dawn not only for Israel and Palestine but for all the countries of the Middle East - a new awakening of peace and prosperity in which this sublime teaching of the Koran can be made real:

> "Those who believe (in the Qur-an),
> And those who follow the Jewish (scriptures),
> And the Christians and the Sabians,-
> Any who believe in God
> And the Last Day,
> And work righteousness,
> Shall have their reward
> With their Lord: on them
> Shall be no fear, nor shall they grieve."(*Surah II, 62*)

But while Israelis and Palestinians are shaking hands and demonstrating their good judgement, the tragedy of Bosnia and Herzegovina continues to fill the world with shame. A Member State of the United Nations which is not expressing ethnic or religious intolerance is trying to survive the bloodiest harassment witnessed by Europe since 1945 - nations respond with passivity and indifference. It is shameful that an international community rejoicing at the end of the cold war has not been able to take more decisive and effective action in respect to the inhuman aggression against Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Decade after decade, the echoes of that cold war were heard in this Hall. The East-West confrontation was viewed as the supreme obstacle facing the countries of the world in attempting to respond to their peoples's common yearning for liberty, justice and development. The ideological division, we were told, hampered the efforts made to ensure that all humanity benefited from development.

Today we no longer talk about the cold war, nor about ideological conflict, nor about the balance of terror. Nevertheless, the reality of what happened during those years continues to brand us. Some walls have come down but still others have been built. The peoples of Asia, Africa and Latin America remain forgotten, marginalized, second-class human beings. The technological gap has become an abyss. Material progress is increasingly remote from our countries, and cooperation is decreasing before our very eyes. The North-South dialogue has once again been reduced to an implacable monologue or, in the best of cases, a rhetorical exercise to which justice and equity are rarely invited. And when we speak of new initiatives for cooperation, such as those recently announced for the people of Palestine, thought is given not to a global increase in aid but, rather, to cutbacks in other programmes. As an old and graphic Spanish proverb puts it: "You undress one saint so that you can dress another ".

What does the new peace mean for the countries of the third world? The assurance that their children will not be killed by bullets, but will continue to die of hunger or endemic diseases? The certainty that they will no longer have to go to war, but will continue without schooling, without a dignified life, decent jobs or proper medical care?

Sometimes ironic statements are made about the optimism of the diplomacy of the 1920s, with its agreements to renounce war and its naive faith in the capacity of the League of Nations to resolve every difficulty. We all know what happened in the end to optimism and that League, but it seems that we have not really learned the lesson. If the international community of the 1990s does not translate the end of the cold war into a true effort to build one world, in which there are no first- or second-rate countries, we shall very soon experience realities more tragic than those we have already known.

My country was overjoyed at the General Assembly's decision to choose you, Sir, to preside over the forty-eighth session. You have the most sincere congratulations of Costa Rica, a country that, like Guyana, forms part of the great Caribbean brotherhood. We are certain that, under

your guidance, the General Assembly will be able to fulfil mankind's hopes for peace and development.

We should like to express our sympathy to the Government and people of India at this time of grief for them.

The present situation is especially critical for the Central American and Caribbean States, which, because of their territorial dimensions, demographic situations and weak economies, are of little significance to the developed world. When the small, peripheral nations like ours try to unite our efforts, we are immediately faced with the locked doors of the international financial organizations, the large economic blocs and the transnational corporations, which even try to create apprehension and confrontation among us.

We are not asking for handouts. Begging is not part of a realistic and wide-reaching international policy. What our countries need is greater understanding of our realities, greater openness for our products, and more sincere and effective support for our desire to live in peace and democracy. What developing nations need is a change in attitude originating from a sense of the inalienable identity of humankind, a change in that amazing effrontery shown by the developed world for our tragedies.

The case of Central America clearly demonstrates the direction in which this widespread indifference is taking us. It is taking us into a prolonged and difficult effort, in which the international community is providing wide support. The people of Central America left behind many years of bloody convulsions. They decided to embark with enthusiasm on a new life, cemented in peace, democracy and freedom. But that joyful Central America, reborn for its children, has seen how the doors close one after another. Those who were interested in a Central America full of bloodshed and trenches do not want to deal with a Central America of the poor, the Central America that calls for cooperation for development, for understanding of its human and economic tragedies.

Figures can be deceiving. For example, it is said that Nicaragua receives $500 million in foreign aid. That sounds very good. What is not stated is that $450 million of the $500 million goes back to where it came from to service the external debt. In the meantime in that sister country even more disturbing outbreaks of violence flourish, reflecting its distressing situation. Recently an attempted *coup d'état* in Guatemala failed, but that failure did not translate into greater external support for the consolidation of Guatemalan democracy in the sectors most needed.

We do not know in which Central American country the next crisis will come, but it will not be long before it happens. It is regrettable that those who said so much about democracy and freedom and about peace and development in Central America are no longer being heard from. Today my delegation asks where is that support. What of the promises, the golden offerings, the abundant talk of a few years ago?

For example, let us take the case of banana production. Throughout the bloody crisis in Central America the European Community time and time again expressed its support for a peaceful and negotiated solution. It effusively supported the initiatives to transform Central America into a land of freedom and democracy, to keep our countries away from the strategic interests of the large hegemonistic blocs. Now that results have been achieved, the same Europe is placing strong barriers to the entry of Central American bananas to its markets, without stopping to think about the thousands of humble families that depend on this activity. Other Latin American democracies are facing the same attitude. As if that was not enough they are trying to provoke a conflict between the banana-growing countries of the Caribbean and those of Latin America, as if, following the custom of colonial times and invoking a non-existent antagonism between brothers, promoting divisions to hide the barriers that in other cases they themselves denounce as unjust.

Costa Rica believes that the time has come for frank, open dialogue that will permit a fair and adequate solution to this serious problem. For this reason we invite the member countries of the European Community and the producer countries of Latin America and the Caribbean, without exception, to enter into political talks which, together with the talks already under way at the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT), will facilitate a *rapprochement* between the positions of the only two parties to the problem, namely the producer and consumer countries. These contacts should have as a basis the recognition of the rights of the Latin American countries to sell their fruit in the Common Market and the reaffirmation of preferential treatment given to the Caribbean countries in the context of the Lomé Conventions.

While democracy endeavours to put down roots in Central America, markets for Central American products are being restricted by developed countries, cooperation programmes are being decreased or canceled, and attitudes

of inexplicable severity are being adopted in commercial and financial negotiations, and even in diplomatic relations. The Central America of peace and freedom is being dealt with in a way that the Central America of violence was never treated.

My country, which for many decades has not suffered from the Calvary of dictatorship and civil war, which has maintained intact its tradition of effective respect for human rights, has also had to face the same attitudes of indifference and lack of awareness. In this matter we draw attention to the disturbing decision of the United States Government to admit an administrative action brought before it against Costa Rica in which it is argued that the Costa Rican workers are not being guaranteed internationally recognized rights. This claim ignores our labour legislation which deals with rights and guarantees for workers and has gone further in more than 50 years than those of many developed countries, including the United States. The threat of excluding Costa Rica from commercial preference systems is not only a clear interference in its internal jurisdiction but also ignores the basic principles governing coexistence among nations, and, more specifically, respect for sovereign rights, and that attitude is at variance with traditional democratic principles and values which have always existed between both peoples and Governments.

The task of consolidating the achievements of the Central American peace process is everyone's responsibility. In the first place, as a new political commitment, the securing of peace and democracy and making human development a priority require a true national consensus sustained by a broad and participatory commitment, one that involves Governments and the organized sectors of civil society.

Secondly, a renewed and creative attitude on the part of Central American Governments is needed, an attitude that will rework and update the regional political agreements and, from a new point of view, will direct regional efforts towards creating a new Central America. We want a Central America where peace, freedom, democracy and development will prevail and this requires national and regional consensus on fundamental subjects such as enforcing the rule of law, strengthening democratic institutions, developing a democratic political culture, promoting and enforcing human rights, economic and political decentralization, decision-making at the local level, the modernization of production, guaranteeing equality of opportunity, widening the possibilities for economic participation, social development, and, finally, preserving our heritage for the society of the future.

Thirdly, the collaboration and commitment of Central Americans in the creation of this new Central America is necessary, but at the same time the participation of the international community is indispensable in order to fulfil the commitments made by the region in its transition to peace, freedom, democracy and development. In this perspective Costa Rica urges the General Assembly to decide in due course to offer its political and material support to this new challenge that is Central America at the end of this century.

In the present state of affairs the role of international and regional organizations as promoters and guarantors of peace and supporters of harmony and cooperation among the nations of the world is particularly decisive. For many long years lamentations were heard about the problems created for the United Nations by ideological conflicts which hindered the Organization and made it impossible for it to act dynamically and effectively. We have left such sombre hours behind and without doubt there have been important signs that this and other international organizations can and must provide many valuable and decisive contributions to the international community as a whole. Precisely for this reason we find ourselves at a key moment and we must now redefine and transform the United Nations and the regional organizations and make them vital mechanisms so that a life of peace, freedom and development will illuminate all the countries of the world.

A little more than a year ago the Secretary-General presented us with a series of important ideas regarding the restructuring of the United Nations. My country has expressed support for these wise proposals but at the same time we consider that the present circumstances are especially important and that this is an opportunity to meditate profoundly on the appropriateness of emphasizing more the role that international organizations should play as builders of a world of peace and development for all peoples.

My country considers that the United Nations cannot continue to ignore the question of the Republic of China in Taiwan. The existence of that exemplary country and the future of its 21 million inhabitants demand a revision of its relations with the United Nations. We firmly support the establishment of an ad hoc committee to study and find satisfactory solution to that problem in accordance with the fundamental principles of international law.

For many years we have urged that the two important instruments of the United Nations system be created and start functioning. These two instruments - so indispensable to the attainment of that system's aims of peace and

defence of fundamental human rights - are the University for Peace and the post of High Commissioner for Human Rights. We ask for support for both institutions, which are true pillars for the realization of the principles of the Charter.

My delegation applauds the efforts made by the United Nations in situations like those that exist in Haiti and Somalia. The defence of international peace and security continues to be a basic responsibility. We therefore support all efforts accepted in the cause of disarmament and arms control, and we view with special concern the case of countries that, like the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, object to controls that are directed towards ensuring the non-proliferation of nuclear arms. At the same time, however, Costa Rica considers it of fundamental importance that States Members of the United Nations not lose sight of the Organization's role in the task of making peace productive - a "sublime task", to borrow the term used by Amilcar Cabral to define the progressive advancement of mankind towards dignity and infinite growth.

The world is one. Our shared concerns for peace and the deterioration of the environment are an ample demonstration of this. Why not also acknowledge that mankind is one and that all who form part of mankind have a right to development and freedom?

The commitments undertaken last year in Rio de Janeiro at the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development to join in the search for sustainable development, in all its economic and environmental as well as its political, social and cultural dimensions, constitute a fundamental requirement if we are to achieve true peace and a dignified life for all the peoples of today's and tomorrow's world. The convening of the Conference and the agreements reached there, notwithstanding their limitations, are major achievements for the Organization. In this connection, the fact that many countries, including my own, have engaged in activities to carry out the commitments entered into there is of great importance. We also welcome the actions taken by the United Nations at the International Conference on Population and Development, the World Conference on Women, and the Global Conference on the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States, aimed at broadening discussions about the hoped-for development. But if those efforts are to be successful, it is indispensable that the promises made by the industrialized countries at the Rio Summit be fulfilled - that is, that they provide new and additional financial aid, something they have so far done on a fairly meagre scale.

For nearly half a century, we have been living amid division, struggles about ideologies, worries over hegemonies. To a large extent, those sterile years are now behind us, but so much remains to be done. We are still confronted by hatreds of all kinds, by a polluted world, by natural disasters, by illiteracy and by peoples suffering from hunger and disease. However, if the international system managed to avoid allowing the cold war to lead to military catastrophe, surely it can find solutions to these other catastrophes that are afflicting mankind. If we do not want the military and ideological alliances of past years to re-emerge, we must replace them as soon as possible with a solidarity that is not founded on economic interests. My delegation firmly believes that the Organization can and must effect, as a priority, the qualitative transformation required by the international community - that is, the creation of a great family, without East or West, North or South. Brothers and sisters know nothing of the points of the compass.

In his book entitled *Things Fall Apart* Chinua Achebe tells of a community in Nigeria where the harvest was poor. Attempting to encourage a young man, his father tells him: "Do not be disheartened. I know you will not be disheartened. You have a brave and dignified heart. A dignified heart can survive a serious problem because the problem does not impinge upon his dignity. But it is more difficult and more bitter when you face it alone."

Hope resides in solidarity and in union. Mankind is one. All the peoples of the world must understand that we share the same future, that there are no longer problems that affect only others or differing destinies for mankind.

Working together with goodwill and in one spirit, we will be able to transform our world into a common home, into a fertile ground for the promotion of and respect for the dignity of all human beings, joined to face a common future of peace, justice and freedom.

Mr. HURST (Antigua and Barbuda): In 1965 three of the Caribbean's most outstanding statesmen created an institution to foster cooperation and to quicken the pace of their countries' development. Errol Barrow of Barbados, Forbes Burnham of Guyana and V.C. Bird of Antigua and Barbuda met at Dickenson Bay, Antigua. There, they signed a historic document creating the Caribbean Free Trade Association (CARIFTA).

Although the three countries they led were not yet sovereign States, those enlightened statesmen envisioned the emergence of an independent, English-speaking Caribbean capable of playing a meaningful role in

international affairs. The entire Caribbean, beginning in 1492 and continuing throughout its modern history, had been an object of international intrigue and international competition. How fitting, then, for that region to help shape world history once it had taken hold of its own ambitions and aspirations.

In 1973, CARIFTA was transformed into a more extensive institution called the Caribbean Community (CARICOM). Today, exactly 20 years after its establishment, all citizens of the 13 countries of CARICOM, whether living in the Caribbean or in the diaspora, celebrate this historic moment when a most able son of Guyana is elected to preside over the forty-eighth session of the General Assembly of the United Nations.

Your brilliant academic career, your outstanding diplomatic skills and your warm, personable style of leadership assured your unanimous election. Antiguans and Barbudans rejoice with you and your country, and my delegation pledges its fullest support and cooperation.

My delegation is appreciative of the role played by the non-English-speaking countries that are members of the Latin American and Caribbean Group of States, whose full support was necessary to achieve this noble objective. The 33 States of the region have quietly made tremendous progress, in this and other forums, in strengthening the bonds of cooperation and friendship that bind us. And though we are divided on a single but important trade issue, we expect that an amicable solution will shortly be found to the satisfaction of both sides.

During the past year, our regional group of States worked together to find a solution to the Haitian crisis. The delegations of Brazil and Venezuela, regional members of the Security Council, made every attempt to include the entire region in the Council's decision-making process as it pertained to Haiti, another regional member. The United States must also be congratulated in that regard.

The peoples of Latin America and the Caribbean now eagerly await the return of President Aristide to Haiti on 30 October three weeks from today, when history will reverse itself. Despite the violence and the dilatory tactics employed by the military leaders in Haiti, Antigua and Barbuda is confident that the forces of good will, decency and democracy will prevail.

I wish to point out that no previous Security Council embargo intended to compel compliance with the will of the international community was ever as swiftly effective as was the embargo imposed on the illegitimate regime in Haiti. My delegation regards this episode as a turning-point in the history of Security Council actions to safeguard international peace and security.

Threats to international peace and security, up until the Security Council action on Haiti, have been narrowly defined as the use of force by one sovereign State against another, or some form of violent confrontation between or among States. A small State like mine, incapable of waging war and no longer an object of conquest, defines international peace and security more broadly.

Grinding poverty and the resultant ecological disaster which characterize Haiti are threats to the peace and security of that sovereign State and its neighbours. Not force, not violent threats, but poverty and its attendant consequences threaten international peace and security. Antigua and Barbuda, a small island State and an ally of democracy and legitimacy in the Americas and certainly in this forum, takes great pride in knowing that all of CARICOM pressed this cause here at the United Nations and elsewhere and that Haiti can count on us never to relent.

Antigua and Barbuda will never relent in its struggle against illegal drug trafficking, either. Located between the suppliers of the South and the markets of the North, we have been thrust by geography into the battle against this scourge. We pledge our slender resources in the global struggle against this global enemy.

Apartheid, another global enemy, is in its death throes. My small country takes pride in knowing that our voice has helped to topple that evil system in South Africa. From the moment of our independence 12 years ago, in 1981, my small country has supported the legitimate aspirations of oppressed peoples everywhere, but especially those of the majority population in South Africa.

In April of next year, when democratic elections are held to choose a representative government in South Africa, Antigua and Barbuda will also be able to celebrate a victory of right over wrong, of democratic ideals over dictatorship, of good over evil. The international community must begin preparing to come to the assistance of an anaemic South Africa whose need for economic good health in a post-apartheid world is even now apparent.

In April of next year, as apartheid suffers its final defeat, the Global Conference on the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States will convene in Barbados. This Conference is the first test of

the will of the international community since the Earth Summit convened in Rio last June. You will recall, Mr. President, that the most significant conclusion of last year's Earth Summit was the determination that industrial civilization is fundamentally flawed.

Development based on the current model of consumption, distribution and disposal practised by the developed world is unsustainable. Abundant quantities of harmful gases and toxins, emitted into the atmosphere, are altering our global environment, and fatal consequences have been forecast for the Earth's climate, its biodiverse flora and fauna, its agriculture, all living animals and human health and well-being.

It should be borne in mind that while the contribution by small island States to climate change, global warming and sea-level rise is zero, the effects of climate change, global warming and sea-level rise will reduce small island States like mine to zero. Our very existence is at stake; our peace and security are threatened by the actions of large and wealthy States whose presumptions about the Earth's resources need to be completely revised.

The Barbados Conference will articulate a programme of action intended to eliminate these man-induced, looming catastrophes and to achieve sustainable development beginning in small island States. The international community's support and good will are required if sustainable development is to be made real and disaster is to be prevented.

Small island States are the foot-soldiers in this battle to save the planet. We will be the first casualties but we will not be the last if drastic changes are not quickly brought about in the developed world.

On Earth's last uninhabited continent, disaster can also be avoided. Antarctica, a pristine and icy wilderness whose waters abound with the most significant link in the oceans' food chain, whose winds control the earth's weather systems, whose tundras conceal the secrets of the Earth's past, and whose icebergs determine sea-levels world wide, must never become the possession of large States alone. Antigua and Barbuda will never acknowledge sovereignty over Antarctica by any State.

In fact, working alongside like-minded delegations, we will continue to press for a mining and oil exploration ban in perpetuity, certain that any other arrangement will lead to a precipitation of ecological decline worldwide, to the detriment of small island States among others. In our view, Antarctica must be declared a world park, control over which should be exercised by our world body.

The world's many peoples must learn to live in harmony with the Earth's environment and peaceably among ourselves. Ethnic strife and wars have taken more lives in the last year than comprise the entire population of my country and several other CARICOM States combined. All multiracial and multi-ethnic societies must learn to settle historic and current rivalries peacefully; when they fail to do so, resources which could well be spent on development are necessarily diverted to peace-keeping.

The peace-keeping missions now undertaken by the United Nations cost more than $3.5 billion annually; as a consequence, development assistance is severely restricted. Peaceful States like mine therefore have an economic interest in seeing a decline in the need for peace-keeping. Sadly, it is anticipated that more civil strife and many more ethnic and religious conflicts will occur in the near future and that the United Nations will be called on to help.

My delegation therefore applauds Liechtenstein for the role it has decided to play in this forum. That small European State is attempting to find a structured solution to the unyielding demand by rival groups within States for a measure of self-determination. The size of a country bears no relation to the intellectual capacity of its statesmen or to its capacity for generating great ideas. Antigua and Barbuda will work alongside this small State in promoting a permanent solution to destructive ethnic conflicts within States.

The world's indigenous peoples must also find permanent protection, and the injustices they have long endured must also quickly cease. Towards that end, our United Nations declared 1993 the International Year of the World's Indigenous People. It is not yet clear just how much impact the declaration has had; a fund has been established in the Americas to support the indigenous peoples of my region, and Brazil and Venezuela have shown courage in their support for the Yanomami, an Amazonian forest people.

Antigua and Barbuda also supports the establishment of an annual International Day of the World's Indigenous People. Having lost the indigenous Arawaks and Caribs of Antigua and Barbuda, beginning in 1492, my country is duty-bound to ensure that powerless indigenous people the world over, who have inhabited the lands of their ancestors for many generations, are adequately remembered and protected by our United Nations.

The people of Antigua and Barbuda condemn the perpetrators of the fierce conflict which continues to rage in Bosnia and Herzegovina, and we deplore the attacks on United Nations peace-keepers in Somalia as much as we abhor the destructive campaign waged by mercenaries in Angola. The civil wars in Liberia and Mozambique are brutish and unyielding, and the civil strife which has erupted in Georgia will likely match both in ferocity and destructiveness.

In the Middle East, the slow trickle of peace has turned into a gushing stream with many tributaries. It is our hope that the Israelis and until the Palestinians will be able to find the source of a lasting flow of peace. Until Israel is allowed to exist within secure borders and until the Palestinians achieve a sovereign State of their own, peace in that region may slowly evaporate.

We rejoice at the wave of peace which has engulfed Lebanon. Its very industrious citizens, flung far and wide by a conflict that seemed unending, can now give back to their homeland some of the talent and wealth which their rich culture bestowed upon them. Lebanon can surely count on its prodigious sons and daughters in the diaspora for every assistance; their generosity is as legendary as their love for their old country.

We welcome the finalization of the demarcation of the boundary between Kuwait and Iraq which was accomplished by the Iraq-Kuwait Boundary Commission in May 1993. We also welcome the adoption by the Security Council of resolution 833 (1993) in which it guaranteed the inviolability of the boundary between the two States. This guarantee shall serve as a deterrent against future conflict between these two neighbours while enhancing stability and security in the region.

My people celebrate with the countries of the Central American region as peace rains down upon them. If future civil wars are to be prevented, however, the economic systems which prevail in Central America must become far more inclusive. In distributing wealth, methods must be found to direct more than a trickle towards the poor.

We note that the impoverishment of Cuba's people is due overwhelmingly to exogenous circumstances, and so our sympathies lie with the people of this sister Caribbean State. In the early decades of this century, Cubans welcomed poor workers from neighbouring Antigua to their shores. Today, standing in solidarity with the Cuban people, Antiguans and Barbudans seek a speedy end to their suffering.

I would be remiss in my duty, as I conclude, if I did not convey to the outgoing President, Mr. Stoyan Ganev of Bulgaria, the gratitude of my delegation for the important role he played during the preceding session of the General Assembly. It was under his watch that six new Members joined our Organization. I welcome to membership the Czech Republic, the Republic of Slovakia, Eritrea, Monaco, The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, and Andorra. Their presence greatly enhances our institution's legitimate claim of universality, as membership climbs to 184.

In that regard, my delegation would note that Antigua and Barbuda supports a manageable enlargement of the Security Council to reflect the new realities. However, our delegation will not join any consensus on enlargement if the qualifying criteria for new membership implicitly require a certain level of wealth and/or a certain population size. Although we harbour no ambitions to sit on the Security Council, my small country cannot agree to be excluded from the Council in perpetuity. Such exclusion would make us less sovereign than larger States.

The moral conscience of our institution can best be articulated frequently by small States with no material interest in the outcome of disputes. But even more important is the fact that our own survival requires us to contribute to the construction of a new world order that will have its basis in Security Council decision-making. We wish merely to retain our option, for we know not what future generations will encounter.

My delegation concludes by recalling that on 31 March 1918 - 75 years ago - another generation of Antiguans and Barbudans challenged an unconscionable system of exploitation that left us materially impoverished. Our grandmothers and grandfathers, then youthful and vigorous, were determined to fashion for themselves and their progeny a future that would be superior to their own inheritance. In 1918, brutality was the response to their legitimate cry for workers' rights.

Twenty years later - in 1938 - a sympathetic Commission was to determine that the deplorable conditions then extant in my country required massive infusions of public finance and good will in order to achieve a marked turn-around. When, in 1943 - 50 years ago, and 25 years after the 1918 revolt - a nationalist named V. C. Bird picked up the mantle of leadership of the workers' organization, my small country began its metamorphosis in earnest.

Seventy-five years after March 1918, the Antigua and Barbuda that has evolved bears no resemblance to the Antigua and Barbuda that history left behind. When V. C. Bird and his trade-union colleagues quickened our stride towards freedom and an improved material condition, beginning in 1943, they had a vision of an Antigua and Barbuda which, 50 years later, has become virtual reality.

As V. C. Bird and his generation pass the mantle of leadership to their successor generation, our old men have visions, and our young women have dreams. Antiguans and Barbudans are aware that there are detractors abroad who may wish to see our freedom snatched from us. We have paid a price for our freedom, which we will for ever defend. And we are aware of the role played by the United Nations and international law in safeguarding the sovereignty of small States.

We shall therefore for ever remain wedded to multilateral institutions like the Caribbean Community, the Organization of East Caribbean States, the Organization of American States, the Commonwealth and this body - the United Nations - which, together, strengthen our sovereignty. Multilateralism is the greatest ally of our freedom, and the United Nations the greatest guarantor.

As Antiguans and Barbudans recall the courage of the heroes of 1918, we pledge never again - never again - to allow injustice and brute force to raise their ugly heads in our beautiful, beloved Antigua and Barbuda. My generation will continue to do all that is necessary to bequeath to future generations a peaceful legacy, where justice rules, ignorance is banished, and legitimate leadership springs from the people's choice. That is our pledge.

Mr. Bassia (Central African Republic) *(interpretation from French)*: The direction that international relations have taken today, although to some extent decided upon by States, reflects, none the less, the limited ability of States to bring the condition of the world into line with the new international social realities. If the problems that face the international community because of this international social dynamic are to be resolved they must be tackled through collective, concerted and appropriate action that goes beyond the national framework. My country is happy that there is among States a growing awareness of these needs. We welcome this new direction as the forty-eighth session of the General Assembly begins.

But before stating my delegation's views about how to encourage States to share this new approach - and as we work in this direction we shall be calling on you, Sir, to demonstrate your great qualities - we should like to extend to you the warm congratulations of the Central African Republic on your election as President of the General Assembly. We pledge to you our full cooperation, and express the hope that your work will be crowned with success.

The wisdom and spirit of compromise with which your predecessor, Mr. Stoyan Ganev, conducted the proceedings at the last session earned the full appreciation of my delegation.

The renewed authority of our Organization is due, of course, to the determination of Member States but also to the conviction and methodical, rational and pragmatic action of the Secretary-General, who has always, and in all circumstances, endeavoured to work for the purposes and principles of the Organization. To
Mr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali we pledge the renewed support of the Central African Republic.

My delegation also welcomes the admission to our Organization of the Czech Republic, the Slovak Republic, Eritrea, the Principality of Monaco, the Principality of Andorra and The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia. Their admission fulfils the oft-expressed desire of the international community to see all the countries of the world as Members of our Organization and thus strengthen its universal character. All States, individually and collectively, must come together to defend the purposes and principles of the United Nations. It is unacceptable for some States still to be excluded.

For this reason, in the view of the delegation of the Central African Republic, today it is important that the place of the Republic of China in our Organization be reconsidered. The immense progress made by the Republic of China in Taiwan in the political, economic and social spheres has now earned it the right to resume its place here so that it can contribute, better than it did in the past, to the flourishing of international cooperation through its active participation in the United Nations system.

The developments in the international arena we are witnessing today arise from the process of transformation that the world has undergone, especially in the last few years. These transformations affect all areas of international life, and, fortunately, States are taking them into account as they manage their international relations, which, to a large extent, determine the direction our world takes. There is also an emerging tendency for problems to have world-wide effects, prompting States to become the

guardians of world interests. This phenomenon is clearly illustrated in cooperation and concerted action among States in the spirit suggested by our Secretary-General in "An Agenda for Peace" in efforts to contribute to laying the foundation for real peace in the world. Indeed, notwithstanding certain reflexive and automatic responses the relics of the cold-war conditions, States today are increasingly determined to do what they can, on the foundation of the principles of the United Nations and in cooperation with the United Nations, in order, if not to eliminate, at least try, to reduce prevailing tensions in other areas of the world.

My delegation is happy that this approach has now made it possible for the situation to evolve as it has in Cambodia, South Africa - where the Central African Republic supports the appeal by the President of the African National Congress (ANC), Mr. Nelson Mandela, to lift sanctions against South Africa - and, finally, in the Middle East, in respect of which my country pays a hearty tribute to Mr. Yasser Arafat and Mr. Yitzhak Rabin for their courage, vision and lucidity in signing recently the historic accord on mutual recognition. This same desire for cooperation is needed in order to bring about a positive and speedy settlement of the problems of the former Yugoslavia, Western Sahara, Angola and Somalia.

The international gatherings recently held in Vienna and Geneva, while making it possible to take the measure of the sad reality of human-rights violations throughout the world, provided at the same time an opportunity for States to reaffirm the need for concerted international action with a view to guaranteeing more securely these values. In addition, since the Rio Conference, States have shown greater interest in the question of the environment, and they have now made Agenda 21 a real platform for cooperation in this area, which will make it easier to ensure better protection of the common heritage of mankind while maintaining conditions for sustainable development.

This tendency for problems to have world-wide effects, if systematically managed, would usher in a new era, that of the triumph of multilateralism, an era in which the United Nations would bring its authority to bear - as it is trying, with varying degrees of success, to do today in certain peace-keeping operations - in other areas of cooperation, such as cooperation for development. Inadequacies in the area of cooperation are in sharp contrast to the declared determination of States to contribute to maintaining balance in the world in the post-cold-war period. It is, then, desirable that real solidarity be cultivated among Member States, which might induce developed countries to support efforts for development in developing countries, in particular in Africa.

The economic condition of these countries is constantly deteriorating from year to year, and they have often come before this and other bodies to bring their problems to the attention of the international community, whose response has, unfortunately, not removed any of the obstacles to those countries' development. Those obstacles are, in short, the continuing decline of prices of commodities, the heavy debt burden and debt-servicing, negative net financial flows and strengthened protectionism. If these factors persist, there is no doubt that the African countries will have increasing difficulty in overcoming their situation. But these countries must not be excluded from development, and everything must be done to encourage their efforts at development.

The duty of solidarity calls for dialogue and cooperation between the developed countries and the developing countries in order to ensure fairer remuneration for commodities and an easing of the debt burden and debt-servicing. Coordinating efforts at the level of the United Nations system, among international economic and financial institutions and organizations and among non-governmental organizations is required to improve the situation of the developing countries.

Such activity would be in keeping with the new spirit that characterizes international relations today and that has made it possible for some developed countries to support the democratization process that has begun in some of our countries, including my own. I should like, in this regard, to express our deep gratitude to all the countries and institutions that have so kindly provided us with material and financial support and sent international observers to help the cause of democracy in the Central African Republic. We hope we shall continue to enjoy their concerned assistance in our endeavour to lay the foundation of our young democracy, and, from this rostrum, I wish to appeal for understanding.

My delegation believes that the time has come to bring about genuine democratization in the decision-making bodies of the United Nations, the Security Council in particular, the membership of which must be adapted to the new realities of the world.

The great developments in science and technology have today reduced our world to a global village where each and every one of us must feel directly affected by all the problems that exist on the various levels of international life. The trend towards the globalization of

problems that has become evident as a result of this ought to be maintained so that States can take up the challenge of defending peace by promoting the development of human rights.

For the Central African Republic, this challenge can be successfully taken up if we fully respect the principles of the United Nations.

The meeting rose at 5.35 p.m.

United Nations
GENERAL ASSEMBLY
FORTY-EIGHTH SESSION

Official Records

24th PLENARY MEETING

Monday, 11 October 1993 at 10 a.m.

NEW YORK

President: Mr. INSANALLY (Guyana)

In the absence of the President, Mr. Yoo (Republic of Korea), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 10.30 a.m.

AGENDA ITEM 9 *(continued)*

GENERAL DEBATE

Mr. KAPUTIN (Papua New Guinea): On behalf of the people and Government of Papua New Guinea, I should like to congratulate Ambassador Insanally of Guyana on his election to preside over the General Assembly at its forty-eighth session. In so doing, I should like to recall - and to express my delegation's sincere appreciation for - the even-handed and efficient manner in which his predecessor, Mr. Stoyan Ganev, the Foreign Minister of Bulgaria, presided over the Assembly at its forty-seventh session.

His outstanding example has maintained and thereby helped to strengthen a high standard which we are confident Mr. Insanally will match. His election brings us particular pleasure because of the many important interests which Guyana shares with Papua New Guinea and the increasingly strong relations which have been developing between our two countries, mainly through cooperation in the context of multilateral organizations such as the Commonwealth, the African, Caribbean and Pacific group of Governments parties to the Lomé Convention, and the United Nations itself.

The Government of Papua New Guinea is also pleased to welcome the further progress towards the universal membership of the United Nations marked by the admission of the Czech Republic, the Slovak Republic, Eritrea, The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Monaco and Andorra. We look forward to cooperating with their Governments and delegations in advancing the objectives of the United Nations.

In welcoming the new Members, I feel bound to observe that my Government is concerned that other small States, including a number in the South Pacific, which find it difficult to afford to join and send missions to the United Nations, should be provided with the means of keeping abreast of developments and of having proper account taken of their interests, perhaps through such arrangements as a regional observer, as a number of Governments have proposed to the South Pacific Forum.

I turn now to the proposed United Nations initiative on opportunity and participation. When I addressed the General Assembly 12 months ago, I said that I had chosen "opportunity and participation" as the main theme and goal of my policy as Minister for Foreign Affairs. I also forecast that my Government would be formally proposing an initiative for the United Nations bearing the same name.

The proposal is now listed as item 151 on the agenda of the current session of the General Assembly. The initiative is, of course, important for Papua New Guinea - opportunity and participation are, in fact, among the national goals and directive principles embodied in our national Constitution. It is also important to other developing countries where increasing opportunity for, and participation by, citizens is a public issue and an official aim. It is, moreover, directly relevant to countries where previous economic arrangements are in transition to

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93-86813 (E)

Distr. GENERAL

A/48/PV.24
1 November 1993

ENGLISH

markets. In an increasingly interdependent world, where issues and ideas often have global implications, it should be of interest and certainly deserves support worldwide.

Papua New Guinea became independent on the very same day, 16 September 1975, as the General Assembly adopted a consensus resolution - 3362 (S-VII), on "Development and international economic co-operation" - directed, in the words of its first preambular paragraph, "to accelerate the development of developing countries". The timing was, almost certainly, coincidental. But it is none the less worthy of notice because of what it suggests about the circumstances, including a continuing need to achieve the same aim on the part of countries such as Papua New Guinea both then and now.

In the early 1990s, Papua New Guinea has been enjoying an unprecedented rate of economic growth, measured, in the standard terms employed by bodies such as the World Bank, at something more than 9 per cent per year. But few would suggest that the living standards of most of our people have improved at anything like the same rate. The measure is quite seriously misleading, as many of us have known for a very long time. But so are government policies and processes of economic development that fail to pay adequate attention to questions of distribution, including who benefits and who takes part. I refer here, I should add, to distribution not only of Government services but of openings - and even more to effective access - for people to benefit by taking part in economic development.

In certain sectors of society in many countries, including my own, people - particularly those living in rural areas - are still trying to enter the cash economy for the first time. In other sectors and even more countries, people who have long been engaged in monetary transactions are trying to increase openings, access and mutually beneficial interactions. Increasing opportunity and participation is, in many respects, a universal goal. The urgency of the need to address the means of achieving it comprehensively, systematically, thoroughly and critically now arises out of concern at several features of the current international situation.

The first is the difficult and often worsening circumstances of and in many developing countries. A second is the problems being encountered in the transition to markets in countries where economic arrangements were previously State-centred. Another feature results from a tendency among economic policy-makers in widely scattered parts of the world, including developed countries and the major international financial institutions, during the 1980s to favour reducing the economic role of the State and to leave questions of access and distribution of benefits to markets.

Complicating the effects of so-called "aid fatigue" in developed countries are the increasing need and demand for aid, investment and commercial loans arising from the changes occurring in Eastern and Central Europe, the former Soviet Union, southern Africa and the Middle East. New opportunities for scarce capital and other resources are also opening up in the same and other areas. Furthermore, expensive and urgent needs will have to be met when the terrible conflicts currently raging in the former Yugoslavia, the Caucasus, parts of Africa and elsewhere are resolved and rehabilitation can get under way.

In other words, resumption or continuation of development in many parts of the world will require that more must be done with less. Opportunity, access and beneficial participation in economic development must be quite dramatically increased if living conditions are to be maintained, let alone improved.

The proposal which the Papua New Guinea Government is therefore making is for the United Nations to establish a small panel of distinguished, expert and experienced persons broadly representative of the international community to review what has already been done and to identify options to increase opportunity and participation, with particular, though not exclusive, reference to the economies of developing countries. We propose not an academic study, but one that draws on actual experience and makes recommendations for practical action. We do not have any fixed ideas about what it should say. Rather, we want it to make a close, critical examination of what has been attempted, what has been proposed and what has been - for whatever reason, or for none - overlooked.

We emphatically do not want the project to begin with doctrinaire assumptions; rather, we want it to ask questions - for example, about when and how it is best for the State to limit its involvement in the economy or to withdraw completely, and when and how the State should act to maximize opportunity and participation. Above all, we want it to investigate and to provide advice on the best way of linking opportunity, via effective access, to participation.

Thus, the panel, the project and the report ought to be multidisciplinary in approach and scope, examining critically both experiences and ideas about ways in which

legal, administrative, economic, social and other arrangements help or hinder increasing economic opportunity and participation.

While the focus should be on the particular difficulties of developing countries, the project should, we believe, look further afield. It will, in fact, have to do so if its research and findings are to stimulate the world-wide information exchange, and, above all make the practical difference which we hope will result.

In my statement to the General Assembly a year ago I described the proposed United Nations initiative on opportunity and participation as being in some respects "the economic counterpart" to the Secretary-General's most succinct and constructive report, "An Agenda for Peace." It should also be seen, I believe, as a complement to, and a necessary filling-out of, other important United Nations resolutions and documents that have been concerned with development issues more generally, such as the reports of the Pearson and Brandt Commissions, and "The Challenge to the South".

The panel and the report envisaged in our proposed draft resolution should, in addition, be viewed as complementing and helping to fill out the Brundtland Report, particularly in so far as they manage to identify options not only for maintaining increased opportunity and participation, but for continuing to increase them so as to allow living standards to go on being raised for and by future generations.

While we await publication of the Secretary-General's eagerly anticipated report outlining an agenda for development, the proposed initiative on opportunity and participation should not be seen as a rival or a duplication. The proposal ought to be seen instead for what it is intended to be, namely, a constructive start and a practical contribution to setting objectives and specifying means for development into the twenty-first century.

Like other supporters of the proposal, the Government of Papua New Guinea has been gratified by the strong and positive response with which the proposed United Nations initiative on opportunity and participation has been greeted by Governments, non-governmental organizations and international bodies in diverse parts of the world.

We have particularly appreciated the expressions of support we have received from the Government of the Assembly's President, the Chairman of the General Assembly's Second Committee, and organizations particularly concerned with advancing the common interests of developing countries, the Group of 77 and the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries.

In our own immediate neighbourhood, we have been assured of strong, individual and collective support by members of the Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN), the Melanesian Spearhead Group, and the South Pacific Forum, which includes the Governments of developed countries in the region.

With assistance from the United Nations Development Programme, my Government has convened both a national and a regional Workshop, in which highly respected, variously experienced and diversely skilled persons gave their time on an honorary basis to help develop and refine the proposal. The proceedings of both Workshops are being circulated to all United Nations members.

When the proposal is debated in the Assembly on 15 November, we look to all members of the United Nations for contributions to its further development and refinement, and, of course, for their votes. As it did with the resolution (47/441) on development and international economic cooperation, adopted on Papua New Guinea's independence day, my Government hopes that the General Assembly will endorse the proposed United Nations initiative on opportunity and participation by consensus.

Believing as we do in the importance of the proposed initiative, but conscious of the severe strains currently imposed on the United Nations human and financial resources, and bearing in mind the recommendation made to all members by the Second Ministerial Meeting of the Standing Committee on Economic Cooperation of the Non-Aligned Movement, my Government has decided to make a special pledge to contribute K100,000 - the equivalent of a little more than $102,000 - to assist in realizing the proposal. While we believe that implementation of the proposal must not depend on special donations, we call upon others to do the same in accordance with their means.

With regard to conferences on development and related issues, consistent with Papua New Guinea's obvious interest in development issues generally, and in those that pertain to small island countries in particular, my Government looks forward to the first Global Conference on Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States, which is to be held in Barbados in April 1994.

We shall remain actively involved in preparations for, and the proceedings of, what we regard as a most important occasion for sharing experiences and ideas,

including both problems and hopes, with island States in our own and other regions.

For closely related reasons, we also look forward to the International Conference on Population and Development, to be held in Cairo in 1994.

Having taken a close interest in the deliberations and outcome of the World Conference on Human Rights in Vienna in June, we shall contribute as best we can to the preparations for the World Summit for Social Development, to be held in Copenhagen, and the Fourth World Conference on Women, scheduled for Beijing, both in 1995.

I turn to the subject of apartheid and sanctions against South Africa. Successive Governments of Papua New Guinea have always been strongly opposed to apartheid, both in principle and in practice. We have consistently applied sanctions, backed by the force of Papua New Guinea law, against those who have upheld it. Even as apartheid has been dismantled, and progress towards a democratic, multi-racial South Africa has been observed, my Government has been conscious of the special perspectives and interests of African States. We have accordingly taken the view that we would remove our sanctions against South Africa only in consultation, conducted through bodies such as the Commonwealth and the United Nations, with such States. Despite the economic interests which might have been served by allowing links between Papua New Guinea and South Africa, we have willingly paid the price our policy has required.

I have been personally moved in recent days by the addresses made by the President of the African National Congress, Mr. Nelson Mandela, before the United Nations Special Committee against Apartheid as well as the Joint Assembly of the African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) Group of countries and the European Community. Following the recommendations made by Mr. Mandela, the Organization of African Unity and the Commonwealth Secretariat, as well as the resolution adopted by consensus in the General Assembly on Friday 8 October, my Government will now take steps to remove legally enforced sanctions. But in doing so we remain conscious of the continuing - and unfortunate - relevance of Mr. Mandela's pointed reminder to the Joint Assembly of the ACP Group and the European Community that:

> "the white minority Government and its institutions ... should not be ... treated as though they were the representative of all the people of South Africa."

The struggle for real equality for the African citizens of South Africa is certainly not over. In some respects, it has scarcely begun. My Government believes very strongly that the achievement of a genuinely stable, democratic and multi-racial South Africa requires increasing opportunities for access to and participation in all areas of society, including the economy, by the country's African population.

My next subject is the progress towards peace in the Middle East. Successive Governments of Papua New Guinea have consistently followed a policy of supporting the right of Israel to exist within secure borders, while recognizing the Palestinian people's right to a homeland. We are accordingly both impressed and encouraged by the dramatic, bold and hopeful agreements reached by the Israeli Government and the Palestine Liberation Organization.

We commend the steps that have since been taken, including the diplomatic and material support provided by other Governments to facilitate implementation of those agreements. As our Prime Minister, the Right Honourable Paias Wingti, has already announced, the Government of Papua New Guinea will do what little it can to further the process, by acknowledging the constructive role being played by the Palestine Liberation Organization and examining ways in which we might seek to strengthen relations with the legitimate representatives of the Palestinian people.

I come now to the reform and revitalization of the United Nations and the recharging of its resources.

The welcome developments in southern Africa and the Middle East, particularly those related to Israel, the occupied territories and the Palestine Liberation Organization, reveal both strengths and weaknesses in the United Nations, and suggest that while there are situations in which the United Nations can play an important, even vital, role, there are also situations in which it cannot.

We must recognize that when the United Nations itself cannot, for whatever reason, be effective, then individual Governments, such as Norway's, regional organizations, such as the Organization of African Unity, or some other body may be able to initiate or facilitate a positive outcome.

The Government of Papua New Guinea welcomes the reforms which are gradually being made to the United Nations system: in the Secretariat and other organs, and in the manner in which our deliberations are organized. We

also welcome the generally revitalized role that our Organization aspires to play in international relations. But we must remember that internal reform and reorganization are only as important as their eventual outcome.

A revitalized United Nations must not be allowed to become an instrument of sectional interests or ill-planned adventurism. In the context of the contrast between the evidently satisfactory outcome of United Nations efforts in Cambodia and the uncertainties of the situation in Somalia, my Government feels a need to sound a cautionary warning. The terrible events unfolding in the former Yugoslavia, particularly in Bosnia and Herzegovina, and the mounting toll of human death, injury and suffering resulting from conflicts in parts of the former Soviet Union reinforce my Government's reservations about aspects of the current debate over the part that the United Nations can and should play in the post-cold-war international order.

The Government of Papua New Guinea is also conscious of the selectivity and costs of United Nations peace-keeping, peace-observing and peacemaking operations, and of the need to ensure that the Organization is reformed, revitalized and re-endowed with sufficient resources to make a difference to the very basis of peace in developing countries: development itself.

My next topic is decolonization, indigenous people and natural resources. In this, the United Nations International Year of the World's Indigenous People, my Government had the rare privilege of hosting a Regional Seminar of the Special Committee of 24 on decolonization, chaired by Papua New Guinea's Permanent Representative at the United Nations. The occasion gave us an opportunity to reaffirm our commitment to the decolonization of New Caledonia, with special safeguards for its indigenous people, the Kanaks. The Government of Papua New Guinea is strongly opposed to any suggestion that the Matignon Accords might not be fully honoured. The same position has been adopted by our partners in the Melanesian Spearhead Group and the South Pacific Forum.

In addition to the question of New Caledonia, the Regional Seminar also focused attention on other relics of European colonialism, including French Polynesia, where Polynesian demands for independence seem to be gaining strength.

Elsewhere in the South Pacific, the negotiated settlement between the Governments of Nauru and Australia has been widely welcomed for the redress it provides for a long period of colonial exploitation of Nauru's principal land-based natural resource and the destruction of much of its natural environment.

The settlement is also arousing considerable interest as to its possible implications in other former Trust Territories and colonial dependencies. The Government of Papua New Guinea is only one of a number of interested parties which have the matter under close examination. My Government is also only one among many in welcoming, and wishing to encourage, efforts to recognize the rights and to improve the situation of other indigenous people in the South Pacific and elsewhere.

Together with our partners in the Melanesian Spearhead Group - the Governments of Solomon Islands and Vanuatu - we have signed a Declaration on Cooperation in Development of Natural Resources. One of the explicit objectives of the Declaration is to facilitate implementation of the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development. Another objective, which has yet to be realized, is to supplement existing efforts in relation to regional fisheries by broadening and deepening cooperation between the Governments of countries in the South Pacific where other natural resources are being developed, often by outsiders.

The crisis in Papua New Guinea's North Solomons Province is an unfortunate and costly internal affair of Papua New Guinea. It continues, still unresolved, even as Government and other services are being restored. I am therefore pleased to report that my Government has recently been engaged in productive exchanges with the Government of the Solomon Islands, particularly concerning the spill-over effects of the crisis on and near the common border.

Following these exchanges, I have issued an invitation on the Government's behalf to the Joint Assembly of the African, Caribbean and Pacific Group of States party to the Lomé Convention and the European Community to send a visiting mission to Papua New Guinea, including the North Solomons Province, to assess the situation and to recommend how it might assist in rehabilitation.

The Government has also announced its intention to work towards an All-Bougainville Leaders' Conference to try to resolve the crisis by political means. The Government of Solomon Islands has offered its cooperation in what has been, at times, a rather difficult situation. We hope to continue our dialogue over long-term measures to strengthen bilateral relations.

With respect to regional and global economic cooperation, the Government of Papua New Guinea, like most other Members of the United Nations, is concerned at the possibility that reform of the international trading system might fail as a result of the apparent intransigence of vested interests in certain developed countries during the final stages of the Uruguay Round of negotiations of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT). We also do not believe that regional trading blocs can be an adequate substitute for an equitable and orderly international trading system.

The Government of Papua New Guinea does not see the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation Council (APEC) as a replacement or a rival for an updated version of GATT. But we do regard APEC as being important to our interests. More than 80 per cent in value of exports from Papua New Guinea go to the existing APEC member countries. Nearly 90 per cent of our imports come from exactly the same countries. Other aspects of Papua New Guinea's international economic relations are just as deeply enmeshed with APEC members. With encouragement from existing members, my Government has therefore applied to join APEC. We believe that it would not be right for such a body to continue without a single member from the centre of a region whose name it bears: the Pacific. We look forward to an early - and positive - response to our application.

In conclusion, I should like to say the following:

No human being can have failed to be deeply moved by, or to feel the utmost sympathy for, people affected by the disastrous earthquake which occurred in India in late September.

No one who has been following the developments consequent on the changes in the former Soviet Union can have failed to be both excited and concerned by the dramatic political and military confrontations which have been occurring in the Russian Federation. All of us must surely be concerned at reports that nuclear testing has been resumed, at the possibility that more tests might follow, and that weapons of mass destruction might grow in number, power and circulation.

In short, notwithstanding the progress made towards finding lasting solutions to some long-standing issues since the cold war ended, we continue to live in a rapidly changing, often fragile and uncertain world. Able by virtue of our membership of the United Nations at least to let our views be known on what are some of the most important and pressing issues of our time, the Government of Papua New Guinea has, therefore, chosen to give close attention to an issue of particular concern to developing countries, to explore avenues of cooperation with other States, and to propose a United Nations initiative on "Opportunity and Participation". Let me end by repeating my previous call for members' support for a proposal intended to assist in identifying what the people and Government of Papua New Guinea believe to be common interests, global problems and practical solutions.

Mr. PAPAZIAN (Armenia): Allow me to congratulate His Excellency Mr. Insanally on his election to the presidency of the forty-eighth session of the United Nations General Assembly. Given his talent and experience, I am confident that he will guide this session to the successful completion of the noble mission entrusted to it by the Charter of the United Nations. I would also like to express my appreciation and thanks to his predecessor, Mr. Ganev, for the contribution he made to accomplishing the tasks of the last session.

I wish to take this opportunity to extend my warm welcome and congratulations to the six States that have been admitted to membership of the United Nations over the past year.

I stand before the Assembly as the Foreign Minister of a small, land-locked, newly independent country of 3.5 million under complete blockade, with no energy resources, still not recovered from the devastating earthquake of 1988, flooded by hundred of thousands of refugees fleeing the conflict between Nagorny-Karabakh and Azerbaijan, and under constant provocation by Azerbaijan to be drawn into that conflict.

I am also the Foreign Minister of the only democracy in the region, an island of stability in a sea of political chaos and turmoil, a country with close to 30 registered political parties, a free press and freedom of conscience and religion, and with laws guaranteeing civil and political rights and freedoms. The Government of Armenia has also made headway towards establishing a market economy and has taken several significant steps to integrate its economy into the global economy. Armenia has moved swiftly in many areas of reform. Most agricultural land and homes and many small enterprises have already been privatized, and a tax programme, a pricing policy and legislative reform to create the legal framework for a free-market economy are effectively under way. Nevertheless, substantial work will need to be done if these advances are to contribute effectively to a successful transition.

It is encouraging to see that the United Nations has recognized that full integration of the economies in transition into the world economy will not only help those economies but also have a positive impact on world trade, economic growth and development, and is prepared to support the process of bringing about economic reform and restructuring through its special bodies and specialized agencies.

I wish to take this opportunity to convey my Government's deep gratitude to the Secretary-General for establishing the United Nations - United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) interim office in Armenia. As a result of adverse natural and geopolitical circumstances, Armenia is currently in a state of economic and social crisis. We see the importance of short-term assistance in these times of great need, but at the same time are fully aware that it is the pursuit of long-term goals that will bring Armenia to function at full capacity as a member of the international community. We are convinced that the presence of United Nations specialized agencies in Armenia such as the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the World Food Programme (WFP), the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), and the United Nations Fund for Population Activities (UNFPA), providing technical and advisory assistance and coordination would enhance the durability of the transition that is well under way.

As we and other nations grapple with problems unique to each, the collapse of regimes and empires continues to fuel violent conflicts throughout the world. But there is an apparent change in the pattern of international conflicts. Very few wars are fought between nation States any more. The rest are struggles for self-determination turned into bloody conflict and civil war in one and the same nation State. These movements need a forum in which to lodge their claims, identify and understand their rights, negotiate with government authorities, establish just administration of their affairs, and peacefully work out realistic political and territorial arrangements for the future.

Now more than ever, it is incumbent upon the United Nations to revisit its provision of non-intervention in matters which are essentially within the domestic jurisdiction of Member States, and to define more stringently the extent of the impact of a conflict on the peace and security of other nations. Having in clear view the essential role the United Nations can play in enhancing peacemaking efforts throughout the world, we concur with recent proposals in academic circles that the United Nations transform the near-moribund Trusteeship Council into a modern clearing-house for self-determination.

Under the proposed system, a "trust territory" would be that part of a Member State voluntarily placed into trusteeship by the Government of that State for the purpose of resolving a self-determination claim under United Nations supervision without prejudicing the final status of the territory. We believe that the trusteeship system could save lives and prevent the escalation of a self-determination struggle to a devastating civil war, or worse, to a regional conflict involving other countries.

The conflict over Nagorny-Karabakh has claimed the lives of more than 10,000 people and has caused close to a million innocent people to be uprooted from their homes during the past five years. This conflict continues to threaten the security and stability of the whole region. The international community has yet to come to grips with the root cause of the conflict and devise appropriate measures to find a peaceful solution.

Armenia's position on the Nagorny-Karabakh conflict has been clear and consistent since day one. The conflict is between the people of Nagorny-Karabakh, who are striving for their self-determination, and the Azerbaijani Government, which is refusing to address the rights and security concerns of the people of Nagorny-Karabakh.

As an interested party, Armenia has advocated an unconditional cease-fire and has fully supported all the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE) initiatives. The Government of Armenia sees no alternative to the peaceful settlement of the Karabakh conflict, than that which can be reached within the framework of the CSCE Minsk Conference.

The recent developments of the peace process are promising. Nagorny-Karabakh has at long last been recognized as a party to the conflict and direct talks between the leadership of Nagorny-Karabakh and Azerbaijani authorities, mediated by the Russian Federation, have brought about a cease-fire, which has continued to hold for more than a month now and is unprecedented in the five-year history of this bloody conflict. On 28 September during its meeting in Paris, the Minsk Group produced the "Adjusted timetable of urgent steps to implement Security Council resolutions 822 (1993) and 853 (1993)", to which Armenia has given its agreement, and is hopeful that a similar position will be adopted by the main parties to the conflict, Azerbaijan and Nagorny-Karabakh.

There is now a genuine opportunity for peace. Therefore, the convening of the Minsk Conference must not be delayed. Once peace is established, legal questions, first and foremost among which is the issue of the status of Nagorny-Karabakh, can be negotiated. The clear position of the Government of Armenia is to accept and be gratified by any solution agreed upon between Nagorny-Karabakh and Azerbaijan at the Minsk Conference.

The CSCE has an explicit security role in the new world order, consistent with the provisions of Chapter VIII of the United Nations Charter. Last May, the Secretary-General of the United Nations and the Chairman of the CSCE Council agreed on a framework for cooperation and coordination between the United Nations Secretariat and the CSCE, namely through the regular exchange of information in the fields of early warning, conflict prevention and the promotion of democratic values and human rights. The CSCE is also striving to obtain United Nations observer status, an initiative which Armenia fully supports.

The successful cooperation between the United Nations and the CSCE over the Nagorny-Karabakh conflict can serve as a case study in how to reconcile, practically, the conflicting claims of regionalism and universalism. Such cooperation will enhance the role of regional organizations in conflict prevention, peace-keeping and the peaceful settlement of disputes.

Armenia appreciates the Secretary-General's report "An Agenda for Peace" which embodies the notions of peace-keeping, peacemaking and post-conflict peace--building. History has taught us, however, that development is intrinsic to peace, and that the two can no longer be thought of as separate processes. Starvation, poverty and poor living conditions in many parts of the world loom as serious threats to stability and peace. The United Nations in its commitment to secure peace for all the Earth's inhabitants must place development high among its priorities. Indeed, it must establish economic and social development as guiding principles for the Organization's activities. Armenia fully supports the Secretary-General's initiative for an agenda for development and looks forward to contributing to this important milestone towards world peace. Armenia also gives its full support to the convocation of the 1995 World Summit for Social Development in Copenhagen.

Today, the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction poses another grave threat to both global and regional security and stability. Armenia supports the indefinite extension of the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) beyond 1995. The United Nations should work to ensure universality and strict compliance with the Convention on the prohibition of chemical weapons.

Development and human rights are also mutually inclusive values. There can be no genuine development unless systems of thought and government are based on respect for the full spectrum of the rights of individuals. It is auspicious that this year coincides with the forty-fifth anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. The spirit of the Declaration and the Vienna World Conference on Human Rights held last June will undoubtedly deepen the understanding of the significance of human rights for stability, freedom, peace, progress and justice.

It is my Government's strong conviction that the adoption and implementation of all human rights principles by nation States will create solid ground for unity and harmony throughout a world which is being transformed and is searching for new constants.

For more effective implementation of the principles of human rights we feel it is imperative to establish the post of high commissioner for human rights and a permanent international criminal court where cases of gross violations of human rights and other crimes against humanity are submitted and prosecuted.

In 1995, the United Nations will celebrate its fiftieth anniversary. In the past 50 years, the Organization has grown and has witnessed historic events, in many of which it has played a considerable role. As the Organization has entered a period in which it is being called upon to take an increasingly active guiding role in a changing world, it too must be prepared to respond effectively to these changes.

Armenia supports the call for restructuring the Security Council that has been placed before the United Nations by its Member States. Because the international community is looking to the Security Council to take a more dynamic role in the maintenance of international peace, it is necessary that the Security Council increase its membership in order that it may be able to address the issues before it in a more balanced and equitable way.

Improving the United Nations administrative performance must also become a top priority at this time. We welcome the current initiatives of the Secretary-General to streamline the Organization's administrative and management structures and procedures

to meet the demands that are now being placed upon the Organization.

As the world seems to have grown accustomed to the dreadful routine of tragic news coming from various regional hotbeds, it is inspiring to reflect on some of the more positive reverberations of the end of the cold war, which can be epitomized by the historic accord between the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) and Israel signed recently. It is my privilege to salute the leaders of Israel and the PLO for taking this courageous step.

No less significant are the processes currently in motion in South Africa. Armenia joins the other Member States in supporting the negotiating process there, and believes that lifting economic sanctions at this time could encourage the people of South Africa to take up the task of building a truly free and democratic country.

In the United Nations, the end of the cold war continues to translate into ever closer cooperation between its Members. In 1992, as in 1991, despite the large volume and the diversified nature of the issues examined in the Security Council, none of the members of the Council exercised its right to veto. There is a growing harmony of interests among nations that is creating an atmosphere of trust and cooperation, which are the prerequisites for the realization of the goals envisioned by the founders of the United Nations 48 years ago in San Francisco.

Indeed, for the first time since its inception, the United Nations has been given the opportunity to become what it was intended to be: a collective security system, with a Charter providing for special forms of cooperation between sovereign States, designed to ensure peace and prosperity throughout the world.

Mr. SENILOLI (Fiji): On behalf of the people and Government of the Republic of Fiji, I congratulate Ambassador Insanally very warmly on his election as President of the Assembly. I am confident that his extensive knowledge of the United Nations system and his wide experience in the field of international relations will help guide this session to a successful conclusion.

I wish to pay a tribute to Mr. Stoyan Ganev for the excellent manner in which, as President, he conducted the business of this Assembly at its last session. I express my admiration and deep appreciation to him for a job well done. I also congratulate him for his initiative in rationalizing the work of the Assembly, and especially in rationalizing its Committee structure.

My delegation applauds the excellent work done by our Secretary-General, Mr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali, in the period since he assumed his high office. I take this opportunity to express my Government's deep appreciation for his untiring efforts in tackling the difficult and complex problems facing the world Organization.

I should also like to extend a warm welcome to the new States Members of the United Nations, the Principality of Andorra, the Czech Republic, Eritrea, the Principality of Monaco, the Slovak Republic and The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia. I am confident that the Organization, as it continues to strive for universality, will greatly benefit from their participation in its work.

New threats are endangering international peace and security in all corners of the world. Incipient nationalism, ethnic conflicts and excessive protectionism are threatening peace, security, and growth in trade. Thus, a heavy responsibility is placed on this Organization, which, as we all know, is the main body responsible for promoting social progress and better standards of life in larger freedom.

Behind these complexities, there are also many devastating structural problems that undermine even the best efforts to achieve security and economic progress. Population growth, if left unchecked, will add 97 million people a year throughout the 1990s. Poverty, disease, famine and oppression account for the 18 million refugees and 24 million displaced persons throughout the world. The gap between the rich and the poor countries has not narrowed, but continues to grow as economic difficulties in the industrialized countries have led to increased protectionist measures against trade. Environmental degradation further compounds these problems.

In the light of these trends, we must underscore the need for better international cooperation in order to arrive at effective solutions. This, we believe, is a critical element in moving us towards the creation of an international order in which this Organization assumes greater importance as the centre of global endeavours.

The process of reviewing the role of the Organization that is currently under way is therefore very timely. We hope that the review will assist greatly in determining how the United Nations can be strengthened and, most important, how each of us as Member countries might best contribute to the new order.

The Secretary-General, in his report on the work of the Organization, has quite rightly stressed the need for

adequate resources. We share his anxiety, and join in his call to Members to ensure that their contributions to the regular budget, as well as to the peace-keeping budget, are met on time and in full. We must make every effort to explore all possible avenues for ensuring that the Organization is put back onto a viable financial path.

My Government would like to pay a tribute to the entire United Nations Transitional Authority in Cambodia (UNTAC) team for the way in which they carried out their mission in particularly difficult and dangerous conditions. Fiji is pleased to have joined other Members of the United Nations in restoring peace in Cambodia through its participation in UNTAC.

That mission has now successfully completed its major task. For the people of Cambodia, who unambiguously demonstrated their desire for peace and democracy, it is the beginning of a new era. We urge all factions to cooperate fully with the new Government by keeping alive the spirit of the Agreements signed in Paris.

The age-old problem in the Middle East has taken a new turn during the past month. This turn of events spells hope for the future in the Middle East - indeed, in the entire world and for all humanity. The desire of both Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin of Israel and Chairman Yasser Arafat of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) to achieve peace for their peoples has necessitated the dismantling of differences that have existed for decades. The Washington accords should pave the way for a lasting peace.

Humanity has been touched by this historic event - the coming together of two arch-rivals for the sake of peace. We congratulate Prime Minister Rabin and Chairman Arafat - indeed, all who have laboured to bring this peace pact to reality. We must also acknowledge the contribution of the United States of America and, indeed, the United Nations and others over the years.

While positive developments are taking place in the Middle East and Cambodia, Fiji is deeply saddened at the fact that the conflict in Bosnia and Herzegovina remains unresolved. Our profound sympathy goes to all who have suffered untold misery. Such a tragedy should not be allowed to continue. We recognize that the issue is a highly complex one, but the international community must do all it can to stop the slaughter, prevent the conflict from spreading, and achieve a lasting and equitable settlement.

We are equally saddened at the events in Somalia. The success of the United Nations Operation in Somalia (UNOSOM) in meeting the humanitarian challenge has cast a ray of hope, for which the United Nations deserves praise and, indeed, support. However, recent violence against UNOSOM II personnel must be condemned, and efforts to find ways of reducing tension between the peace-keepers and the local population must be given high priority.

Having for years witnessed the repugnant policy of apartheid in South Africa, we are pleased at the rapidity with which that policy has recently been broken down. We congratulate the leadership in South Africa - the South African Government, the African National Congress (ANC) and others - for their courage, determination and foresight in getting together and dismantling apartheid. The United Nations has played a major role in the process, but we should continue the effort until a democratic Government is elected by all - I repeat: all - the peoples of South Africa.

Fiji, like the other members of the South Pacific Forum, shares the sentiments that the Secretary-General expresses in "An Agenda for Peace", in which he highlights the positive role that regional organizations can play in the maintenance of international peace and security in their own regions. Fiji will support such regional initiatives.

On the economic front, we believe that a successful conclusion to the Uruguay Round is vital to economic growth and prosperity in all our countries. Only increased access to markets for our exports, especially in areas of comparative advantage, will enable us to increase our external purchasing power - our ability to pay for imports from the developed countries. In any event, we look forward to a genuinely equitable outcome that will include a substantial and liberalizing effect on trade in agricultural products.

Slow progress in finalizing the Round has led to the formation and strengthening of regional trading blocs. Many new initiatives now being put in place are defensive responses to existing regional trading arrangements. These have the potential to weaken the multilateral character of the trading system, as many of them do not comply with the spirit and the provisions of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT).

Developing countries, it has been estimated, lose about $100 billion a year in export revenues as a result of market barriers in industrialized countries - about twice the official development assistance that the industrialized countries provide. Furthermore, it is most ironic that

taxpayers in the industrialized countries pay both for aid and for imports that are more costly as a result of trade barriers, while the poorest developing countries lose more in trade than they gain in aid. For these reasons alone, further progress in trade liberalization, through success in the Uruguay Round, is very urgent, and we join other delegations in stressing that no effort should be spared in bringing the Round to a successful conclusion.

Of the 42 resolutions on disarmament issues adopted by the Assembly at its last session, 15 deal with various ways of controlling nuclear arms, the management of nuclear waste, the banning of nuclear tests and the elimination of nuclear weapons. In this regard, we welcome the decisions by nuclear Powers to extend their testing moratorium, and we regret very much that this moratorium has just been breached. We call on all nuclear Powers to continue to honour the moratorium. In August this year, the South Pacific Forum welcomed the commitment by the Governments of France, the United Kingdom and the United States to the early negotiation of a comprehensive test-ban treaty. We take this opportunity to urge all the nuclear-weapon States to participate actively in the negotiations and to adopt the Treaty as soon as possible.

The signing of the chemical-weapons Convention in Paris early this year was a major step forward in the process of eliminating weapons of mass destruction. As a demonstration of its commitment to that end, Fiji has not only signed the Convention but also ratified it - the first country to do so.

In the South Pacific Forum, member Governments, including the Government of Fiji, highlighted the importance of an enhanced international regime to deal with possible transboundary damage arising from peaceful nuclear activity, and noted the absence of effective international rules for nuclear liability. Members of the Forum have agreed to participate in the ongoing deliberations of the Standing Committee on Nuclear Liability convened by the International Atomic Energy Agency and to support the establishment of a comprehensive international legal regime dealing with liability for nuclear damage and reflecting fully the principle that the polluter should pay.

Fiji welcomes the continuing growth in the number of parties to the non-proliferation Treaty and will support indefinite extension of the Treaty.

In support of international peace and security, we have consistently contributed to many peace-keeping operations over the years. Since our first participation in peace-keeping operations in 1978, Fiji has been involved in seven. We pay tribute to the men and women currently engaged in United Nations peace-keeping operations around the world. Peace-keepers are being increasingly asked to serve in high-risk environments. That these are high-risk operations is tragically borne out by the fact that hundreds of peace-keepers have made the supreme sacrifice in their service to humanity.

The time is right for the issue of the safety and security of peace-keeping personnel to be addressed in a more systematic, comprehensive and practical manner, and we support the notion wholeheartedly. The related question of responsibility for attacks on United Nations and associated personnel, and measures to ensure that those responsible for such attacks are brought to justice, is also now an important one to address. We shall fully support any effort in that direction.

Apart from the large increase in the number of peace-keeping operations, many important changes are taking place in the nature of peace-keeping. The eight peace-keeping operations undertaken since the end of the cold war have involved not only traditional military activities but also a wide range of humanitarian and civilian activities. The constantly changing nature of the various crises means that we must increasingly be more innovative in designing peace-keeping operations, as they are normally very costly.

As indicated in the report of the Secretary-General, the 17 peace-keeping operations are now costing the Organization some $2.8 billion annually. To some extent, the answer to the increasing costs lies in more preventive diplomacy aimed at defusing potential conflicts. Moreover, the involvement of Member States, either on an individual basis or through regional organizations, in peace-building and peace-keeping activities appears to be another effective way of preventing military clashes. In this regard, the Secretary-General has placed before us several suggestions which, we believe, deserve our serious consideration and action.

I now wish to turn briefly to a subject that has been the focus of a great deal of attention, especially during the last three years; that is, the subject of sustainable development. Several resolutions adopted by the Assembly on following up the important decisions taken at Rio about 15 months ago are now being implemented at various levels. It is most encouraging that we now have 162 countries that have signed the Framework Convention on Climate Change, and 26 countries that have ratified it.

Fiji ratified the Convention in February this year, and hopes that the required number of ratifications, 50, will soon be achieved, so that the Convention can enter into force. As global warming and a rise in sea level are amongst the most serious threats to the Pacific region and to the survival of some small island States, Fiji reaffirms its support for the Convention and takes this opportunity to urge all States to sign and ratify it as soon as possible.

Fiji has been active in the area of environmental management and protection. The Rio Conference has, however, changed the way in which many of us now view environment and development issues. More than ever before, we are committed to the idea that the development of our economy and society must not come at the expense of our environment. To the contrary: development and environmental protection are complementary.

My Government is committed to sound environmental management and protection as an integral part of our decision-making process. A national environment strategy has now been adopted by the Government, and will form the basis for further work on environmental issues in Fiji.

The United Nations Conference on Environment and Development has recognized in the Agenda 21 plan of action for sustainable development, that small island developing countries are a special case for sustainable development. Small island countries supporting small communities are ecologically fragile and vulnerable; because of our small size, our resources are limited, and because of our geographic dispersion and isolation from markets, we are placed at a disadvantage economically and have limited economies of scale.

Our dependence on the ocean and our coastal environments is also very significant. They are not only of strategic importance to us; they also constitute a valuable development resource.

It was in this context that, last year, we welcomed the adoption of General Assembly resolution 47/189 calling for a Global Conference on the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States, to be convened in April 1994. We appreciate the very important work that has been put into the organizational session and the preparatory meetings, convened early this year. We hope that the Conference will be successful and will help us not only to identify the most critical issues involved but also to agree on precise and practical solutions for overcoming our vulnerabilities. We urge all member countries to participate in this Conference and to assist in finding solutions to problems that have buffeted small island countries for a very long time.

The small island States contain a wealth of biological diversity of global significance - our rich marine ecosystems rivalling the better-known tropical rain forests in their importance to life on this planet and in their potential for new knowledge and new products, including medicines. An international cooperative approach to conserving our coastal and marine resources would benefit not just the island States but the world as a whole.

The international community met in July this year and examined ways and means of conserving and managing straddling and highly migratory fish stocks. We believe that good progress was made at this meeting in identifying the problems that exist and areas in which fisheries cooperation between States could be improved.

There are still, however, several important tasks remaining that need to be completed before the next session of the Assembly. Fiji, therefore, fully supports the convening of two further sessions next year to enable the Conference to reach agreement on all issues relating to the conservation and management of straddling and highly migratory fish stocks.

Fiji was the first country to ratify the 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea. We are therefore gratified that the Convention is soon to achieve the 60 ratifications required for its entry into force. We continue to support all efforts towards universal participation in this very important Convention, which is to govern over 70 per cent of the Earth's surface. In this regard, we are pleased that all States - including now the United States - are engaged in the ongoing dialogue to resolve the outstanding problems and thereby pave the way towards universality for the Convention.

Over the next few years, the Organization will be focusing its attention and energies on the convening of several very important international conferences. While these conferences will be important in themselves, as they will bring together the world community, they will not only discuss issues that are assigned to them but will also provide opportunities to arrive by consensus at solutions to many of the critical problems facing the world today.

The World Summit on Social Development planned for 1995 will help to strengthen social development in all countries by giving political impetus, at the highest level, to the promotion of social policies. The three core issues that have been established for the Summit - the alleviation

of poverty, the growth of employment, and the enhancement of social integration, especially of disadvantaged groups - are all essential. Above all, the Summit should, in our view, foster greater understanding of the importance of social development and, particularly, its relationship with economic development and protection of the environment.

The Fourth World Conference on Women, to be convened in Beijing in 1995, will, we hope, be action--oriented and provide an opportunity to review past activities and, most important, set new priorities. For its part, my Government is fully committed to strengthening the role of women in economic and social development and has taken several steps to integrate women into the mainstream of national development. Towards this end, plans have been formulated and are being implemented by the Ministry of Women and Culture, other sectoral ministries and non-governmental organizations. Women constitute more than 50 per cent of Fiji's population, which makes them valuable partners in the growth and development of our country and the uplifting of our people.

We are, at the same time, also turning our attention to the situation and needs of children in Fiji as we continue to participate actively in Universal Children's Day. Fiji has ratified the Convention on the Rights of the Child and has signed the World Declaration on the Survival, Protection and Development of Children in the 1990s. We have also undertaken a detailed study of the situation of children in Fiji and have identified areas which require our attention. We are now in the process of following up the recommendations of this study.

Fiji, as a multiracial and multicultural community, attaches great significance to family values and family traditions. We therefore welcome and appreciate the decision by the United Nations to observe 1994 as the International Year of the Family. My Government has already formed a national committee, comprising representatives from both government and non-governmental sectors, to make preparations for observance of the International Year of the Family in a meaningful and practical way.

The International Year of the World's Indigenous People will soon be coming to a close. With the observance of the International Year the attention of the United Nations has for the first time been focused directly and solely on indigenous peoples. Next year, the Commission on Human Rights will assess the activities of the Year. It is important that the voices of indigenous peoples should continue to be heard, and their right to self-determination, their right to rebuild their communities in dignity with freedom of choice, must continue to receive the full support of the United Nations.

The draft text of a declaration on indigenous peoples' rights, first proposed in 1985, received the approval of the Working Group last July. Fiji welcomes the Working Group's decision as an important step towards a much-needed international instrument on indigenous peoples' rights.

The International Year of the World's Indigenous People, should not, we believe, be treated as an isolated event, but as the beginning of a long-term policy of supporting, protecting and learning from the world's indigenous peoples. For our part, we have set aside a special day in our nation's calendar to commemorate this event, coinciding with the birthday of Ratu Sir Lala Sukuna, one of the great leaders of the indigenous people of Fiji.

The indigenous people now comprise the majority of Fiji's population but my Government recognizes the need and will do its utmost to ensure unity, order, equity and security for all the people of Fiji, so that we can all live in peace and harmony. We will continue to ensure that harmonious relationships are established and maintained both among our own people at home and with other people abroad.

With reference to my own region, the South Pacific, we are following very closely the current progress in New Caledonia towards the self-determination of that territory. We hope that the developments, as envisaged under the Matignon and Oudinot accords, will continue so that the indigenous Kanak population will be fully prepared to take part in the referendum in 1998 and to decide on the future political status of their country.

Speaking at the session of the General Assembly last year, on 8 October, Fiji's Prime Minister, Major General Sitiveni Rabuka, promised to initiate a review of the 1990 Constitution of Fiji, which has been the subject of controversy both locally and abroad. I am pleased to say that my Government has already set in train the process for the review of the Constitution, as promised. The review is to consider how the provisions of the Constitution can be improved upon to reflect fully the concerns and interests of Fiji's multi-ethnic and multicultural society.

This Organization, now almost 50 years old, has stood the test of time but, like other institutions, it must also

adjust to change. We must continue to examine ways of making it a forum for both discussion and action on the important social, economic and political issues facing the world community as they evolve.

In conclusion, I should like to reaffirm my country's commitment to the United Nations and to the spirit of international cooperation and solidarity that it embodies. My country, and its people, joins with other nations to do its utmost to seek world peace, stability and sustainable development for all. We firmly believe that the United Nations remains the only hope for mankind to achieve peace and prosperity. It is through the combined efforts of all Member States, large and small, that we can develop a global environment which is just and equitable and which reflects the legitimate needs and interests of all peoples.

Miss CHIEPE (Botswana): Botswana and Guyana have, since their attainment of independence, both in 1966, been the closest of friends. That is why we have welcomed the election of Ambassador Insanally of Guyana to the presidency of the forty-eighth session with so much warmth and anticipation. I say "anticipation" because we are confident that he has the requisite experience, expertise and diplomatic finesse to make a good and productive President for this most hopeful session of the Organization.

Our gratitude goes to the outgoing President of the forty-seventh session, the Foreign Minister of Bulgaria, who gave the best account of his skills in the service of the Assembly last year.

The new Members who have just joined the United Nations are most welcome in our midst. We assure them of our fellowship and readiness to cooperate with them in the service of peace here at the United Nations.

We also wish to congratulate the Secretary-General, Mr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali, on the creative dynamism he has injected into the work of the United Nations. We know his work has not been easy. But under his able leadership the United Nations has indeed demonstrated its capacity to serve as a reliable instrument of impartial management of international conflicts. Increasingly, we are seeing the fulfilment of the ideas contained in what I think was the most forward-looking report ever produced by a Secretary-General of this Organization, "An Agenda for Peace".

Mr. Ansari (India), Vice-President, took the Chair.

We commend the efforts the Secretary-General has undertaken so far to enhance the Organization's effectiveness. Botswana understands the concerns raised by the Secretary-General when he addressed the Fifth Committee in August. Many demands and problems foisted on the United Nations have put a lot of strain on its coffers. Resources made available by Member States are far from enough to meet these demands. Thus, the Organization is facing a financial crisis of unprecedented magnitude. The biggest problem, as explained by the Secretary-General, is the failure of some Member States to fulfil their financial obligations by paying the assessed contribution for both the regular budget and peace-keeping missions. Member States must heed the Secretary-General's call and fulfil their Charter obligations by paying their contributions in full and on time.

At the same time, it would be remiss of me not to emphasize the need and importance of transparency and accountability in the use of United Nations funds. Of late, we have heard of many irregularities in the administration of this Organization's funds, in particular funds for peace-keeping missions. A number of proposals have been put forward by the various Member States for a review of the rules and regulations governing United Nations finances. The time has come to set up a respectable mechanism to undertake this urgent task.

Although the cold war is no more and old ideological empires have unravelled, the euphoria of triumphalism has been short-lived. There is turmoil almost everywhere as age-old nationalisms that have for so long been suppressed explode with a vengeance that knows no limit. True to character, the twentieth century will not, so it seems, fade away peacefully.

The post-cold-war era and the celebrated onset of a new world order have thus not brought peace to our world, but more bloodshed, instability and insecurity in many places. Consequently, there has been a rapid expansion of United Nations peace-keeping operations - far beyond the capacity of the Organization's resources to manage. There is neither the manpower nor the financial wherewithal for the United Nations to be everywhere in the magnitude of presence that is so often requested.

There is, nevertheless, every reason for us to be satisfied with the valiant efforts which the Secretary-General and his staff have exerted to ensure that the many fires of civil war that have become such dominant features of the so-called new world order do not engulf us all. The United Nations has shown that, given the wherewithal, it can live up to what we expect of it in the realm of peacemaking and peace-keeping. Cambodia has just been saved from self-destruction. Imagine what Somalia could

have become had the United States and the United Nations not intervened to safeguard the delivery of the massive humanitarian assistance which the international community has poured into the famished country. Even in the Balkans, where the most brutal and senseless civil war imaginable is in progress, particularly in the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina - a civil war that for a year and a half has been defying every solution attempted - the United Nations has played a mitigating humanitarian role under the most difficult of operational circumstances.

On Somalia, Botswana stands firm in its support for the United Nations mission of mercy in that devastated country. We condemn in the strongest terms the continued attack on United Nations peace-keeping forces even as we deeply regret the loss of innocent Somali lives. We cannot condone the massive loss of civilian lives in Mogadishu, though at the same time we need to be extremely circumspect in apportioning blame to one side of the conflict or the other. An international effort to save a people is in serious jeopardy. An attack on United Nations peace-keeping forces must never be taken lightly, for it is fraught with very serious implications. The horrendous spectacle of the corpse of a United Nations peace-keeper being dragged like a garbage bag on the streets of Mogadishu deserves all the opprobrium civilized humanity can heap on such a callous act of inhumanity. The international community must not flinch in the face of the acts of those in Mogadishu who are bent on thwarting the process of reconstruction and rehabilitation in Somalia.

In many ways, the United Nations Operation in Somalia (UNOSOM) has been a success. Botswana is proud to have made a contribution to UNOSOM, however modest.

The terrible civil war in Bosnia and Herzegovina is a monumental outrage that must shame us all as human beings. A world that is able to tolerate scenes of tiny innocent children being torn to pieces or maimed by shrapnel and bullets - innocent and helpless victims of a war that makes sense only to its perpetrators - is a world without a conscience. The international community must devise more creative ways and means of dealing effectively with that savage conflict.

To turn to our own continent, in Mozambique there is an encouraging movement towards peace and tranquility. The situation there has stabilized enough to give us more hope than ever before that the war-ravaged sister country will soon enjoy the beginnings of economic recovery and national reconciliation and healing. Humanitarian relief is now able to reach the famine-stricken. The United Nations peace-keeping force, among which is our own contingent, is progressively moving towards full deployment and the accomplishment of its mandate. It is hoped that the many cease-fire violations thus far recorded will not sabotage the peace process.

The survival of the State and nation of Angola is in very serious jeopardy as the senseless civil war that has been raging there since the mid-1970s has worsened and assumed the dimensions of an unstoppable conflagration. All the efforts of the Security Council to find a lasting solution to the civil war have come to naught as a result of Mr. Savimbi's stubborn refusal to negotiate a peaceful end to the conflict. Unfortunately, in the face of this stubbornness on the part of Mr. Savimbi, the world seems utterly incapable of doing anything more than calling continuously for peaceful negotiations - a call that is continuously scorned.

The international community must do more to save Angola. A terrible crime against humanity is being perpetrated against the Angolan people. We take note of the recent announcement by UNITA that it is ready to accept the Bicesse Accords and the results of the 1992 elections. The Government has in principle agreed to the resumption of peace talks. We hope that this time the peace talks, if they take place, will produce the solution we have been desperately waiting for.

In South Africa, the horizon of change is more promising than ever before. Negotiations for a new South Africa have been torturously slow and painful, but they have, in a stunning reversal of fortune, produced the first tangible evidence of the onset of real and meaningful change. The legislative structures that are to underpin the transition to the establishment of a democratic Government in the first half of next year are in place. Four bills - namely, those regarding the Independent Election Commission, the Independent Media Commission, the Independent Broadcasting Authority and the Transitional Executive Council - have been adopted by the Negotiating Council and will soon be enacted into law, having been passed by the South African Parliament.

Once the transitional legislative package has been completed with the adoption of the interim constitution and the constitutional principles and fundamental rights at present under negotiation, the transition will officially begin with the installation of the Transitional Executive Council. To show the great promise that the situation in South Africa holds today, I can do no better than quote Mr. Nelson Mandela's momentous speech of 24 September

to the United Nations Special Committee against Apartheid. He said,

> "The countdown to democracy has begun. The date for the demise of the white minority regime has been determined, agreed and set".

In its statement of 29 September 1993 the Ad Hoc Committee of the Organization of African Unity on Southern Africa concurred that enough progress had been made in the peace process in South Africa to warrant the lifting of economic sanctions. This was a momentous decision taken by Africa in the ardent belief and hope that we are truly approaching a historic watershed in the blood-stained history of southern Africa: the end at last of the long nightmare of apartheid. However, as Mr. Mandela and the Secretary General of the Pan-Africanist Congress of Azania, Mr. Benny Alexander, have conceded, freedom is not yet there. With all the horrific violence now ravaging the KwaZulu countryside and the East Rand townships, in the back yard of the World Trade Centre in Johannesburg, where the negotiations are taking place, the process does not lack enemies or detractors. There is also the unfortunate boycott of the negotiation process by some parties, whose implications it is impossible to ascertain. Nevertheless, the people of South Africa, more than ever before, will need and, indeed, deserve our determined companionship as they walk the last and, possibly, the most difficult mile in their journey to the new South Africa.

Regrettably, progress, if any, has been very slow in the implementation of the United Nations plan on Western Sahara. We urge the Secretary-General to continue to spare no effort to ensure that the referendum is held so that the people of Western Sahara can at long last decide their future.

Botswana is encouraged by the readiness of all parties to the Liberian conflict to honour their commitments to the Yamoussoukro Accords and other subsequent peace plans. We are anxious to see the Accords implemented peacefully and in full. The Secretary- General, in his last report on the subject (S/26422), notes that a successful implementation of the Accords would require sufficient resources. We appeal to all Member States to be generous in their contributions to the trust fund set up for this purpose.

It is with a sigh of relief that we welcome the adoption of Security Council resolution 872 (1993) on Rwanda. We appeal to all the parties to the conflict in Rwanda to cooperate fully with the United Nations Assistance Mission for Rwanda (UNAMIR) in ensuring that that war-torn East African sister country does not revert to the carnage that has often threatened its very existence.

We celebrate the triumph of the democratic process in the south-eastern Asian nation of Cambodia. The shroud of misery and death that for many years eclipsed Cambodia has, hopefully, now been lifted, and lifted forever. We congratulate the United Nations and the Cambodians on a job well done. 89.56 per cent of Cambodian voters, undaunted by violence and threats of violence, have spoken loud and clear that they want peace and reconciliation.

In the Middle East, the homeland of the Bible and its miracles, we have recently witnessed a miraculous *rapprochement* between the Jewish people of Israel and the Palestinian people. The foundations of peace in the area have been laid, and no effort should be spared to build on them. No effort should be spared in making the peace process only just begun a just, comprehensive and lasting one. Given the desperate conditions in the occupied territories, we, the international community, have a duty to support and nurture the peace process by contributing generously to the economic reconstruction of the area to enable the Palestinians to taste the fruits of peace.

We cherish the hope that the sudden improvement of prospects for peace in the Middle East will have a catalytic and propelling effect on the quest for a workable formula for the reunification of the island Republic of Cyprus. So long as the island remains divided, it will remain a source of conflict and instability in the area.

So it is with Korea. Botswana hopes the divided peninsula will soon realize that it has become fashionable in this post-cold-war era for age-old problems suddenly to become amenable to solution. Change - peaceful change - through negotiation is the imperative of our time.

In Central America, after many years of conflict, El Salvador is finally at peace. We hope that the proven capacity and efficacy of the United Nations in the field of election-monitoring and supervision will again be put to good use in El Salvador's March 1994 election.

In Haiti, we look forward to the imminent restoration of the presidency of Father Aristide. The success of the United Nations and the Organization of American States in shaping the agreement deserves our commendation.

Botswana, a country whose respect for human rights is second to none, supports fully the creation of a post of

commissioner of human rights. We have no human rights abuses to hide, nor do we fear criticism - constructive criticism, that is - should the international community find some aspect of our domestic policy or policies to be incompatible with the enjoyment of human rights by our citizens. This is not an invitation to interference in our internal affairs. We have always maintained that no nation has the right to violate the basic human rights of its citizens while using Article 2 (7) of the Charter as an argument against intervention by the international community.

Recent reports have revealed that the United Nations is spending roughly three times as much on peace-keeping and peacemaking as on development assistance. Problems of development, as should be clear to everybody, constitute the underlying cause of world conflicts, and for the United Nations to be effective in the maintenance of international peace, more energy and resources have to be expended on development activities.

Of particular concern are the downward trend in Africa's commodity prices, the debt burden and the shrinking aid flow. In addition, many African countries, including my own, have had to cope with the serious effects of drought and famine. The civil strife which many African countries have had to cope with have also had a crippling effect on economic activity through damage to infrastructure.

In order for an effective process of development to get under way in Africa the international community needs to establish a more open trading system giving access to, and adequate compensation for, commodities produced in Africa. For the past several years the market share for African goods has experienced a dramatic decline. Botswana appeals for a speedy conclusion of the current Uruguay Round of multilateral trade negotiations, which we believe will strengthen Africa's trading capacity and allow unrestricted access of our commodities to the world markets.

The debt burden continues to be a major obstacle to African economic growth and development. Clearly, necessary measures have not been taken to attend to this compounding problem. The time has come for the donor community and the multilateral financial institutions to heed Africa's call to reduce or totally cancel the debt stock.

We live in exciting times, exciting in both positive and negative ways. We have been fortunate to wake up from the long nightmare of the cold war and bear witness to the birth of a new world, however imperfect. The birth of any new epoch has never been easy or free of pain. The membership of the Organization has multiplied with the rapid emergence of new nations, whose aspirations for self-determination had for so long been frustrated.

The import of this most welcome development is, of course, not simply that we are close to universality but, also, that the problems facing the Organization have multiplied. Thankfully, our rejuvenated United Nations seems to have borne this increased load of responsibilities with a great deal of enthusiasm. Botswana renews its faith in this rejuvenated United Nations and in its time-tested Charter.

Mr. TAVERAS GUZMAN (Dominican Republic) *(interpretation from Spanish)*: The delegation of the Dominican Republic takes great pleasure in extending its warmest congratulations to Mr. Samuel Insanally on his well-merited election to preside over the General Assembly at this forty-eighth session. A man from our America - and, more specifically, from the Caribbean region, where both of our countries are located - he has the required abilities and experience successfully to guide our work at this session, which must confront and deal with the major challenges facing the international community, namely, the achievement of peace and the economic and social development of our nations.

We also wish to express our appreciation to the outgoing President, Mr. Stoyan Ganev, for the wisdom with which he led our deliberations at the previous session.

I should also like to take this opportunity to extend our thanks to the Secretary-General of the United Nations, Mr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali, for his commitment and for his efforts to carry out the principles and purposes of the Organization's Charter.

Today, in our America, we are witnessing the beginnings of a negotiated solution to conflict, and we are pleased that in Central America, and particularly in El Salvador, Nicaragua and Guatemala, the disputes that have disturbed the peace and hindered the development of our peoples are now being resolved at the negotiating table. In our Island of Hispaniola, imperial and colonial rivalry divided the population into two peoples who, over the course of time, established two independent States - the Dominican Republic, which we represent here, and the Republic of Haiti. The efforts being made by the Haitian people and their leaders, with international assistance in the form of negotiations under the aegis of the United Nations and the Organization of American States, are now

beginning to bear fruit and will, we trust, restore normalcy to that fraternal country with the re-establishment of constitutional order.

In that connection our delegation reiterates its appeal to the international community to lend real assistance to stabilize the democratic regime and to ensure the economic reconstruction of Haiti - assistance and cooperation adequate to meet the needs of peace and employment. The Dominican Republic, in so far as it is able, remains ready to continue to cooperate with this fraternal people to lighten the heavy burden of its current problems.

In this respect, we are pleased to report that the Prime Minister of the Haitian Government, Mr. Robert Malval, recently made an official visit to the Dominican Republic, with a view to fully normalizing relations between the Dominican and Haitian peoples and establishing the full spectrum of relations between the two countries, in their mutual interest. I am happy to say that the Haitian Prime Minister was given a very warm welcome by the President of the Dominican Republic, Mr. Joaquín Balaguer, who has always been interested in finding a solution to our brother country's political conflict and especially in alleviating the serious economic situation there. As a result of the meeting, the two statesmen reached an agreement, subsequently formalized, that will ensure the speedy and constructive normalization of relations, with real reciprocal cooperation, between our two States.

There is no more appropriate forum than this for me, on behalf of my country and Government, to appeal again for massive aid from the most developed nations of the Earth to that afflicted and impoverished neighbouring brother country.

Since the conquest and colonization of America, the Dominican Republic has defended human rights. It was in our island, Hispaniola, that a loud voice was first raised on behalf of the rights of the indigenous inhabitants of our American lands - the voice of Brother Antón de Montesinos, in his famous Advent sermon. Faithful to that first call for the redemption of our continent, our Government honours this historical tradition, which is fully valid today in our country's official and private practice. It has been working on instruments - which might eventually become international in nature - that will contribute to giving juridical force to that tradition.

Our country has advocated the universality of human rights. We believe that neither geographical, economic, social, religious nor cultural differences can ever be used as a pretext for showing contempt for human rights.

The Dominican delegation believes that, because of the increase in the membership of the United Nations - currently at 184 countries - there should be a more equitable representation in the Security Council, while at the same time we continue to abide by the provisions of paragraph 1 of Article 23 of the United Nations Charter. Now that the bipolarity of the past has disappeared and the use and abuse of the veto are fading, the Council should become more representative of the new international reality. This should be done in broad consultations, after due reflection and with account taken of the need for equity, so that the Council can become more representative without its effectiveness being in any way mitigated or weakened. Rather, its authority and responsibility will be enhanced so that it can respond effectively to any crisis with which the international community might be confronted, as the Council has done recently. In this regard, we consider that it would be practical and feasible to give the Council greater flexibility in meeting the just aspirations of nations, such as the Republic of China, that wish to become Members of the United Nations and cooperate in carrying out its principles.

I would now like to express our views on developments in the international situation, particularly on conflicts that, in one way or another, have been affecting international peace.

I shall refer first to the Central American crisis, which, happily, today is on the road to a definitive solution because of the positive evolution, under the auspices of the United Nations, of the El Salvador peace agreements, and the recent return to democracy in Guatemala, which augurs well for the institutionalization of peace and prosperity in that region.

Next, we would like to refer to one of the most complex and difficult conflicts facing the international community today - that is, the existence of extreme nationalism, which in some cases has led to fratricidal wars and the annihilation of large groups of people because of racial and cultural hatred. This has happened in the former Yugoslavia, where even now, despite the efforts of the United Nations and intensive diplomatic activity, blood is still being shed between brother peoples that until recently lived together under one flag. Our Government wishes to see a swift solution to the situation in the former Yugoslavia and reiterates its support for measures taken by the Security Council, in particular the establishment of an international war tribunal to pass judgement on crimes against humanity committed in some areas of the conflict.

We would especially like to point to one positive development that represents perhaps our best hope for peace today: the transitional agreement between the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) and the Government of the State of Israel. The long-standing conflict in the Middle East engendered dangerous tension that has kept the entire world in suspense and has been regarded as the potential source of a future conflagration of incalculable destructiveness.

In connection with the development to which I have just referred - the agreement between the Palestinians and the State of Israel - it might be time to defer consideration of or remove the items on that conflict that have long appeared on the General Assembly's agenda. With this reciprocal exchange of olive branches of peace, we can see the promise of harmony between peoples that have been living in such uneasy proximity.

We must recognize how the persistent diplomacy of the United States contributed to securing the results that have been achieved. The United States considered the situation with a view to deciding what was possible in relations between the Arab and Jewish peoples. The agreement culminated in the signing at the White House in Washington. In our opinion, that demonstrated unequivocally and very clearly to international public opinion the sincerity of the parties, who were fully aware of the extreme importance of the commitments into which they were entering.

We must constantly stress the importance of the environment. After economic crisis and the imbalance between North and South, the major challenge facing mankind is the environmental crisis. The gradual destruction of ecosystems and the deteriorating quality of life of human beings are unavoidable aspects of everyday existence for the peoples of the world. Thus, it is essential that the course of events be changed. The political will of Governments and of all those who participate in organized civilian society will be necessary to our taking up this great challenge, which will involve commitment on the part of everyone - a commitment from all mankind.

In that connection, the Dominican Republic supports the general outline of the Plan of Action that was adopted at the summit Conference on Environment and Development in Rio de Janeiro in 1992. Here we have a valuable instrument for political programming and regional cooperation to protect the environment in Latin America and the Caribbean.

The latter part of the twentieth century has witnessed major changes in world political affairs, ranging from the end of the cold war to democratization in the countries of Eastern Europe. Despite this ideological thaw, however, we still have arms trafficking and nuclear arsenals and, therefore, a serious threat to peace.

Let me refer once again to the situation in the Korean peninsula and mention specifically North Korea, which is continuing its nuclear research and investing enormous resources in this undertaking. Let us invite the Government of North Korea to become a party to the universal agreements on the control of nuclear weapons. Let us invite it to cooperate transparently and effectively with the International Atomic Energy Agency in that body's important task of inspecting and monitoring nuclear facilities. Willingness to do so would constitute evidence of that Government's respect for its own nation and of its concern for the future of its people and of all mankind.

We support United Nations measures to put an end to arms trafficking. We support efforts to ensure transparency in military expenditures so that military activity may be made more predictable, and peace and international security, at the regional and world levels, strengthened.

Let me now turn to two important issues that are still on the agenda of this Assembly.

May I, first, draw the attention of the international community, as represented here, to the positive developments in the area of drug trafficking, which are due to the success of many measures aimed at combating and eradicating what has for too long been one of the most ominous scourges of mankind. None the less, we must redouble our efforts to ensure that measures are implemented both internally and internationally and result from coordinated policies of all the nations represented here today. The Dominican Republic has just become a party to the 1988 United Nations Convention against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances and the 1972 Protocol Amending the Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs of 1961, bringing itself up to date on international legislation in order the better to play its role in collaborating with other States and agencies.

The other issue to which I wish to refer is the economic crisis affecting most countries of the world. Today, the phenomenon of globalization of the economy and integration of regional blocs is typical of the international situation, which is evolving so rapidly that countries such as mine can no longer put off negotiations

to determine their participation in multilateral free-trade agreements, customs unions or regional markets.

In this connection, the international activities of the Dominican Republic focus on the economic programmes of countries in our region and regional organizations that can help in our development and in our enjoyment of technical and financial cooperation.

The implementation of appropriate domestic policies by our Government will ensure that trade and investment will become the ideal means to strengthen bilateral relations, underpinned, of course, by the unilateral granting of trade benefits under the Caribbean Basin Initiative and by the opening up of our market under the Americas Initiative.

In the new international order, another of the major challenges that the Dominican Republic must face is the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) and its possible implications; we understand that NAFTA, as a theoretical possible outcome, would imply an effort towards the complete liberalization of trade throughout the hemisphere.

I should like to emphasize the Dominican Republic's strong support for holding a World Summit for Social Development to take up matters relating to the social situation in the world, particularly that of women, young people, the elderly, the handicapped and families. The Summit will have to deliver a clear undertaking for common policies to defend and protect these important segments of the world's population collectively, and we hope that many of our countries will take measures to extend coverage and protection for these social sectors, especially for children and the elderly.

We should like to draw to members' attention a subject of serious concern to my Government and country, and that has complex and serious ramifications that will be brought before the appropriate forums during the forty-eighth General Assembly session. This is the Secretary-General's proposal to merge the International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women (INSTRAW) with the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM). Theoretically, the General Assembly will study this proposal in November.

My Government attaches the greatest importance to this decision, and requests this world forum to give it its closest attention in order to avoid committing a grave injustice by taking hasty action or the like.

INSTRAW was conceived at the First World Conference on Women, held in Mexico City in 1975, and was established as the result of a series of resolutions, including, we should like to recall, Economic and Social Council resolution 1979/11 of 9 May 1979. This resolution specified clearly that the permanent headquarters of the Institute was to be my country, the Dominican Republic, a developing country.

Moreover, my Government gave the United Nations the building that is being used as the Institute's headquarters. Not only that, it had to make significant investments in terms of money and other resources in order to overhaul the building to bring it up to the specifications required by the Organization.

We request the Secretary-General to postpone any action leading to merger between INSTRAW and UNIFEM until such time as the General Assembly considers his proposal and comes to its own conclusions on the matter.

Also, it would seem that there is an attempt being made to ignore, unilaterally, the Agreement between the United Nations and the host Government that is the legal framework within which INSTRAW operates. My Government regards this as a serious - an extremely serious - impropriety, and reserves the right to use all relevant legal means to assert its legitimate rights.

Finally, the delegation I lead calls upon the consciences of all nations and on all those leaders who bear upon their shoulders responsibility for the destiny of their countries and the world, for peace, common sense and mutual respect to prevail over violence and for there to be cooperation and solidarity between peoples; for these are the supreme purposes of this Organization.

Mr. ARSALA (Afghanistan): Permit me, first of all, to congratulate Ambassador Insanally on his unanimous election as President of the United Nations General Assembly at its forty-eighth session. I am confident that, under his dynamic and wise leadership, coupled with the support of that able and consummate diplomat, His Excellency Boutros Boutros-Ghali, the Secretary-General of the United Nations, the deliberations of this Assembly will produce constructive and fruitful results in meeting some of the major challenges our world is facing at this time and in laying a sound foundation for international relations in the foreseeable future.

Our appreciation is also extended to His Excellency Stoyan Ganev, the President of the General Assembly at its

forty-seventh session, for his successful conduct of that session of the Assembly.

I would also like to take this opportunity to welcome the new Member States that have joined us. I expect that their participation at this session will contribute significantly to international peace and cooperation.

The world has witnessed phenomenal changes within the last two or three years. With the collapse of Soviet communism, many new independent States have emerged, and several countries whose citizens lived unwillingly behind the Iron Curtain for almost half a century have rejoined the free world. The bipolar world has disappeared and the cold war has practically ended. These great changes provide an opportunity for us to reduce international tensions, to attain true parity among nations, to put an end to wasteful investments in destructive and devastating armaments and to free up our resources for more productive use by all our citizens.

On the other hand, however, we also see that these changes in the world have created substantial uncertainties and in many instances have given rise to extremely tragic regional, local, ethnic and religious conflicts which, unless addressed by the international community, will endanger world peace. These conflicts, combined with the continuing problems of poverty, the widening gap between the rich and the poor, and the scourge of drug use and drug trafficking could offset the advantages we all hope to gain from the recent changes. Do we have the vision, the creativity and the resolve to ensure that the world takes positive advantage of the new realities for the benefit of all countries and peoples? Or will we continue to be myopic, dogmatically blind and self-centred, and risk losing this great opportunity?

The Afghan people have a special stake in the choice we collectively make. We wish to ensure that our choice is the right one and that all countries, including Afghanistan, share fully in the benefits that should flow from the new realities. Our special stake is based on our belief that the changes that have taken place in the world are partly the result of the enormous sacrifices made by our nation during the 14 years of struggle against Soviet occupation and communist rule.

In this context, I would like to say a few words about some of the issues confronting the world community today, issues which we must address in this Assembly. I will then discuss the situation in Afghanistan and state what our expectations are of the United Nations and the world community.

One of the issues confronting us is that of Bosnia and Herzegovina. The country's situation is indeed tragic, and will be a test case to determine whether we in the international community have the sense of justice and can muster the resolve to end this tragedy successfully and justly. The continuing occupation of Bosnian Muslim territories by the Serbs, backed by the armed might of Serbia, the intransigence of the Serbians *vis-à-vis* the Security Council resolutions, and the untold atrocities committed against the innocent Bosnian Muslim population is not only an affront to this Organization but also an insult to humanity. The delegation of the Islamic State of Afghanistan believes that aggression must not be rewarded and that any territorial gains that were made as a result of force should and must be rectified. A definitive time limit should be set by which the Serbs should agree to the terms of the London Conference and withdraw from the seized territories. Otherwise, the current arms embargo against Bosnia should be lifted and other urgent and effective measures, including the use of force, should be considered by the United Nations and the international community to ensure that the Bosnian tragedy is ended and the Serbian aggression repulsed.

The Palestinian people have suffered long. The Islamic State of Afghanistan would like to see peace finally achieved for these people in a way that meets their national objectives and satisfies their right to self-determination. We believe that the declaration of principles on Palestinian self-rule signed in Washington on 13 September 1993 will serve as the basis for a long-term solution to the Palestine problem and ensure peace and stability only if it is followed by earnest negotiations that lead first, to the withdrawal of Israeli forces from the occupied territories; secondly, to the establishment of an independent Palestinian State that includes the Holy City of Jerusalem, one of the three most sacred cities of the Islamic world; thirdly, to the return of the Palestinian refugees; and fourthly, to a resolution of the problem of Israeli settlements in a manner acceptable to the new Palestinian State.

Kashmir is another tragic issue that requires urgent attention. This issue has not only caused substantial suffering to the people of Kashmir, but has become the source of friction between two important neighbouring States in South Asia and has prevented the full realization of the economic and trade potentials that exist within and outside the region. The Islamic State of Afghanistan therefore urges the resolution of this issue by these two States through negotiations under United Nations auspices or under any other arrangements that may be acceptable to

both sides, taking into account the wishes and aspirations of the people of Kashmir.

In the case of Somalia, the Islamic State of Afghanistan is distressed by the chaos which has resulted from increasing civil upheaval. We support the peace-keeping efforts of the United Nations and hope that international participation can ensure a safe end to the turmoil in Somalia and the establishment of a viable government to protect the interests and rights of the Somali people. We believe all peaceful avenues that might help in solving this problem should be explored.

The Islamic State of Afghanistan supports every equitable international effort to prevent the proliferation of nuclear weapons. However, given that most of the tragedies around the world are caused by the massive increase in the availability of conventional weapons, my delegation would welcome and support a resolution to control the production and sale of such weapons. Such a resolution should also provide for effective arms collection programmes in countries which are saturated with weapons that are causing internal and regional instability.

Now I would like to focus the attention of the Assembly on my own country, Afghanistan. As all of you know, Afghanistan has suffered enormously within the past 15 years. I do not wish to go into the details of the destruction that has taken place, but I would like to highlight a few points very briefly.

The Secretary-General, Mr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali, has aptly summarized the tragedy of Afghanistan:

> "Few countries in history have suffered to the extent Afghanistan has over the past fourteen years. Aside from the physical destruction, which was often nothing short of cataclysmic, the results of the war include well over a million people killed, over 2 million disabled, nearly 6 million refugees in neighbouring countries, and 2 million internally displaced persons."

Almost the entire transportation, communication, and power infrastructure in Afghanistan has been either wiped out or severely damaged. The agricultural system is in total disarray, with the irrigation system destroyed, much livestock killed and the agricultural credit and extension services totally defunct. The placement of millions of mines throughout the country makes it impossible to revive the agricultural sector. Forests are denuded and the environment spoiled. Attempts to provide health care, medicine, immunization and so on are stymied by the destruction of so many hospitals and clinics. Mental health problems resulting from many years of war and bombings have no relief. In addition, thousands upon thousands of amputees require artificial limbs. Thousands of schools have been destroyed and many of our teachers and professors have been killed or exiled. Indeed, illiteracy has overtaken almost our entire population. A whole generation of Afghans has no experience of normal life or of education in any form.

The other two urgent problems we have are both linked to the lack of jobs and of economic alternatives within Afghanistan: the problem of large numbers of weapons in private hands and the problem of illicit drugs. I shall return to both of these matters a little later.

Let me describe the plight of one individual, Abdul Rahim. This man escaped to Pakistan from the war in Afghanistan nine years ago. He was newly married, with one baby, and during his years in Pakistan he had two more children. Two of his brothers were killed in battle, and the third died of disease that went untreated because of poor medical facilities. He is responsible for two of his widowed sisters-in-law and their five children. Thus, as he returns to his village in Afghanistan he is the head of a family of twelve. He finds that his parents, who had refused to leave, are no longer there. It will be some time before he learns of their fate. His home is reduced to a pile of rubble, as, obviously, are those of his neighbours. The shops of the village are gone. The once-paved road that came almost to the village is an unrecognizable path of dust and rocks. There is no water and no electricity. Worse, there are no trees or source of wood, and winter's shadow grows longer with each cold night. In his once productive fields lie burned tanks and odd pieces of metallic rubble. His cousins nervously talk of land mines, one of which killed an old neighbour the day before his return. His family is concerned about lack of flour, tea and sugar. This person is just an example; there are millions of people like him in Afghanistan.

One of the most damaging legacies that Afghanistan has inherited from Soviet occupation, Communist rule and the long, drawn-out war is a substantial break-up of our civil and military administration and the virtual collapse of our economic and financial institutions. In the past year the Government has taken substantial steps to correct the situation. Indeed, progress has been made in re-establishing central authority and in reviving public and private economic and financial institutions. None the less, considerable work and much assistance will be required before we begin to overcome those shortcomings.

In addition, given the destruction that has taken place, we are in need of a massive reconstruction programme which we are unable to undertake unless we are assisted by the international community. Last year the General Assembly adopted a resolution calling for reconstruction assistance to Afghanistan. Not much has happened since then. A similar draft resolution will be presented to the Assembly this year, and we hope that it will be supported and that many can take part in putting it into effect.

When we raise the question of assistance for reconstruction and revitalization of the economy, our request is gently dismissed with the reply that once security is established, Afghanistan will be helped. While granting that security is important for a full-fledged reconstruction programme, I would suggest that a reasonable degree of peace and security does exist in large parts of Afghanistan. In these areas reconstruction is possible and, if started, could serve as a catalyst in revitalizing the entire Afghan economy. There are only a few areas where tensions exist and where there may be intermittent fighting. We should also bear in mind that it may not be possible to have full peace and security in the country unless we are able to start the process of reconstruction and provide people with productive economic opportunities to make it attractive, and indeed possible, for them to give up their arms. The vicious circle of security first and then reconstruction or economic revival first and then security must be broken if we are to make any progress.

Another dimension of security is obviously political. To ensure that the entire Afghan nation participates in determining the country's future political structure, we plan to hold elections in the course of the coming year. We have therefore requested the United Nations to help organize and supervise the election process.

Now I should like to come back to the two or three points which I mentioned earlier.

One issue worth mentioning here and which has had both regional and international implications is that of narcotic drugs. At the present time the illicit cultivation, production, stocking, smuggling of and trafficking in narcotic drugs are without a doubt critical problems that face humanity. Regrettably, one of the legacies of the long war is the transformation of some parts of our country into staging areas for illicit drug activity. This phenomenon, which is the result of the unavailability of economic alternatives, is a source of great pain to us. The Islamic State of Afghanistan, despite its scarce resources, has undertaken serious measures in the struggle against illicit drugs. We shall spare no efforts in combating these illegal activities. However, we must not overlook the reality that Afghanistan, with its extremely limited means and massive economic and financial needs, is not in a position to accomplish effectively this task on its own. Afghanistan needs urgent support from the international community to intensify the struggle against cultivation and of trafficking in drugs.

Another area where we require cooperation is that of land mines. Last year the Secretary-General's report brought to the attention of the world the fact that there are more than 10 million land mines in Afghanistan. It should also be mentioned that, on average, about 300 people fall victim to land mines each month. The agricultural sector, the traditional base of the Afghan economy, will never be revived until these mines are cleared. We of course express our gratitude for the past and ongoing mine-clearing programmes of the United Nations and experts from other countries. However, there is an urgent need for greater assistance by interested countries both in actual mine-clearing operations and in training Afghan citizens so as to enable us to complete this task in as short a time as possible. In this connection, the delegation of the Islamic State of Afghanistan wholeheartedly supports the new item, introduced by the European Community, on the current agenda of the General Assembly concerning mine-clearing programmes for war-stricken countries.

We Afghans want to reconstruct our country and to heal the wounds of the war that was imposed upon us. We look forward to a normal life in which all our citizens participate fully in the political, economic, and social life of the country, without any prejudice and without discrimination based on ethnicity, religious sect, language or gender. Here we consider it particularly important that Afghan women play an effective and positive role in the process of rebuilding Afghanistan. We want to raise the standard of living of our people. We want to live in peace with all our neighbours and to cooperate fully with them so that we can use the vast resources of our region to the maximum advantage of all our peoples. Indeed, we want to serve as a transit and trade route in our region. To this end, the Islamic State of Afghanistan intends to devise a reconstruction and development strategy that takes into account not only Afghanistan's own requirements, but also the requirements of the region.

We are of course distressed by the recent upheavals in Tajikistan. We have made every effort to ensure that tensions along the Tajik-Afghan border are reduced. For this purpose, official visits at the highest levels have been exchanged between the two countries. These visits have

resulted in mutual understanding on important issues. Appropriate communiqués to this effect have been issued in Kabul and Dushanbe. We welcome the decision of the Tajik authorities to solve their internal political problems through negotiations so that the Tajik refugees now in Afghanistan can return to Tajikistan voluntarily with confidence, in security and with honour, in accordance with international norms. To this end we are planning to reach a trilateral agreement between Afghanistan, Tajikistan and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees.

The Islamic State of Afghanistan stands firm in support of human rights. This we consider not only an international commitment, but also a religious conviction. The fact that after the collapse of the communist regime in Afghanistan and the takeover by the Mujahideen, no policy of revenge against the former regime members was pursued is a good indication of this commitment. It is true, however, that due to the massive number of weapons now in private hands in our country some individual incidents of human rights violations have taken place, and skirmishes between different armed groups have regrettably led to the loss of innocent lives. Therefore, the Islamic State of Afghanistan is taking measures to collect heavy arms from various armed groups. We seriously hope that these efforts will bear fruit in the not too distant future.

I also want to make it clear that, having been the victims of terrorism ourselves, the Afghan nation opposes terrorism in any form or shape. We will never tolerate terrorism or allow Afghan territory to be used for such acts. Terrorism and the killing of innocent people is abhorrent to our religious beliefs and to our traditions. God Almighty condemns the killing of innocent people and says that when anyone kills an innocent person, it will

> "be as if He slew the whole people". (*The Holy Koran, V:35*).

The world is also witness to the fact that throughout the unequal war against the former Soviet Union the Afghans at no point carried out any acts of terrorism against Soviet citizens or Soviet property.

I would like to conclude by stating that the international community will draw maximum advantage from the changes that have taken place in the world if we assume responsibility for, and become committed to, working collectively towards improving the lives of all peoples, while each country maintains its full independence and enjoys equal rights and privileges as a separate nation. All countries represented in this body should be thinking not only of the prevention of conflicts, but also of engaging our energies to uplift the economic, social, and political lives of every nation and citizen so that all are safe, secure and free. It is with such vision, such commitment, such sense of sharing, that we will be able to realize the objectives for which this Organization was founded. For the attainment of these goals, we must ensure that new opportunities in the world are not wasted and that the sacrifices of millions of people who gave their lives for freedom and dignity, as well as the silent suffering of those who despaired under years of poverty and oppression, were not in vain.

For our part, I would like to assure the Organization and the international community that Afghanistan will be a full and cooperative partner in all constructive collective efforts aimed at ensuring international peace, stability, progress, freedom and justice.

May God bless everyone present and help us all in our efforts.

The meeting rose at 1:30 p.m.